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My Stories of Teaching in China: "Foreign Expert"?

by

L. Elaine Masur

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Department of Secondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1998

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *My Stories of Teaching in China: "Foreign Expert"?* submitted by L. Elaine Masur in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Ma[redacted]e Doherty-Poirier

Julia L. Ellis

April 7, 1998

Dedication

Dedicated to my children,

Chéwynn and Xiàn,

who will benefit most from its completion,

and to their grandfather,

A. M. (Tony) Mardiros,

whose express support motivated me to try.

Without his encouragement,

which I often felt despite his absence,

I would not have believed it possible.

Abstract

This thesis is my attempt to resolve frustrations incurred while teaching English as a second or foreign language in China in 1992-93. Despite having had years of teaching experience in Canada, I discovered that the assumptions I brought to China about the roles and relationships of students and teachers did not match the reality of China. Through triangulation of data from a literature review, interviews with Chinese nationals, other Canadians who had taught Chinese students as Foreign Experts in China or in Canada, and personal narratives, I explore socio-cultural histories and existential realities (Clandinin, 1994). By making cultural assumptions transparent, I reveal the differences and similarities in expectations of roles and relationships among students and foreign language teachers. I learned from cultural assumptions, incorrectly applied cross-culturally, by sharing facets of experience as a student and teacher in Canada and as a Foreign Expert in China. Implications for further research are included.

Acknowledgments

Without the support I have received from numerous people, family, friends and my professors, in the final completion of this thesis, I could not have gotten here. My parents were always there for me, helping me in whatever ways they could, whenever I asked. My mom taught me to search; my dad made me want to demonstrate what I found.

My professors have been most helpful in giving me not only the support of their wisdom, but have been compassionate, accepting complications of extenuating circumstances. Dr. Bilash's unwavering support, warmth and humanity gave me strength whenever my own persistence ebbed, as well as that final push to the finish line. Support staff in the Department have been most patient.

My friends and colleagues were consistently encouraging and helpful. I wish especially to thank Pat Rempel at H.T. Coutts Library for her assistance, Bruce Baldwin for his many kindnesses and unwavering support, Joan Seath for the colour she provided, kind offers of help and encouragement, and Bill Boyd whose "hacker's" expertise saved my sanity more than once. I want to thank the people I interviewed who gave their time and considerable thought to the questions I searched for answers to.

And finally, I must acknowledge my husband. Without his influence there would have been neither need to begin nor, by times, cause to persist.

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Chapter I Contextualizing the Research

Introduction

With increased international trade and global communication between English and non-English speaking countries, English has become the most common language used in trade. Its relevance is "of immense importance to Third World countries" (Lasisi, 1988, p. 27). Thousands of teachers from countries where English is the first language take up positions as teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Asia every year. As workers in this language "industry", our ability to fulfill our obligations and meet expectations placed upon us depends on choices we make.

In a process of professional development resulting from experiences we have in our cultural exchange, we may choose only the selfish and superficial experience of tourists, remaining Canadian teachers working in China. We may adopt the teaching practices of the culture we visit. We may participate in cultural exchange, accept and empathize with some of the differences that separate us. Or a third alternative open to us is to adapt our theory and practice to the cultural milieu in which we find ourselves. This work is conceived of experiences of the adaptive kind (Brown, 1986; Oxford, 1994).

I begin with a story that demonstrates some of the difficulties and challenges I faced as an EFL teacher in north China - challenges to my personal and professional identity induced by abrupt relocation to a very different culture. I did not much use the specially purchased journal intended to log my perceptions of China, Chinese, teaching and daily living while I was there. I intended the book as a place "to enter scraps in, just to jot me down in. ... It seems to me it helps to write things and thoughts down. It makes the unworthy ones look more shamefaced and helps to place the better ones for sure in our minds. It sorts out jumbled up thoughts and helps to clarify them. ..." (Carr, 1966, p. 20). The *scraps* I did write down and the memories, gnawing frustrations and feelings of inadequacy, even incompetence, have contributed to this thesis. "It is often said that those who visit China for a week write a book about it. Those who stay a month write an article. And those who live here a year or more - write nothing" (Maley, 1986). After eleven months in China, I have written the following.

The Chinese way: A novel context for teaching authentic literature

The year of 1992-93 marked the long awaited fulfillment of a dream for me. I went abroad to teach. When I was young, the nearest I came to distant travels was through vicarious experiences, reading about far-off places and exotic cultures in novels. I despised Mother-in-law for her overbearing and domineering abusive ways in Pearl Buck's Mother Earth *as much as the daughter did. I did not understand the culture. I hated the system for causing and perpetuating the degrading poverty of the wretched nomadic peasants in Steinbeck's* Grapes of Wrath. *I did not understand the economics of the times. In Hemingway's* For Whom the Bell Tolls *I imagined the rolling hills, the greens of the forest, the silence. I had never seen such a place. It was only through novel reading that I could travel and experience other cultures, have some experience of the realities of others.*

My Prior Experience of Learning

In high school I had many effective teachers. They helped me love the study of all aspects of English, my "best subject". But I was frustrated by my inability to read the whole works from which excerpted readings were taken in our anthology text, the unquestioned "great" authors of story, essay and poem. I looked forward to the escape into inspiring long hours of single-minded writing assignments.

My high school English teacher was gifted. His appropriately chosen concise or in depth responses to questions never discredited the asker. Rather, they encouraged us to think for ourselves. His voice in dramatic readings reverberated off the walls as he interpreted Shakespeare, bringing his students to understanding the stultified language by breathing life into it. His lisping stage whisper held us enraptured as he helped us suffer with William Golding's protagonist-victim in Lord of the Flies. *I remember him pacing the classroom, his scratchy tenor voice carrying me along with him into expansive meadows of knowing. He knew his subject matter well; he was confident; he asked volumes of questions that drew information out of us. He reaffirmed our confidence in our own abilities.*

I was fascinated by a course about the English language - its systems, structures and forms, designed in large part and taught by this same man. That course helped set my career direction. Would that I could become a teacher of his calibre! I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree in Education in 1979 with specialization in elementary special

education and dual minors in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Language Literature. I worked my way through university in the library system and eventually was hired as a school teacher librarian. At night school I completed a Graduate Diploma in Elementary School Libraries. The best part of my work for the next ten years was teaching about stories, writing and helping students acquire the knowledge they wanted in their fields of interest.

Despite my mid-1970's theoretical background in ESL, my intuitive personal philosophy about language and information acquisition lead me to teach language and literature in ways related to what later became known as a whole language approach. My beliefs in the effectiveness of my avant garde approach were further reinforced by the enthusiasm my students showed for the subject matter. I worked hard trying to be a "good teacher", to be for my students what my high school English teacher was for me. I learned a lot about teaching in those ten years while teaching junior high language arts, junior high special education and being the teacher librarian for students aged five to fifteen.

But I had taken ESL because I wanted to see the world I had read about. This twenty year hiatus from 1971 when I graduated high school to 1991 had interrupted my dreams long enough. Thus, when I arrived in northern mainland China at the end of August, 1992, I was very excited about my immanent adventure in teaching English at a teachers' college. I was assigned to teach "ESL" in two different certification programs for potential teachers. At the main campus of the college, students took a four year Bachelor of Arts in English program in preparation for careers as middle school teachers (equivalent to our junior and senior high school). At the Branch campus a two year diploma program prepared students to teach in grade schools, similar to grades one through six, the mandatory education for all registered Chinese citizens. I was assigned to teach four courses: Pronunciation and Intonation, Spoken Conversation, English Language Media, and English Literature.

The How of What: Teaching the Content in ESL/EFL

I viewed my assignment in this way. First as an instructor in the content areas, helping students improve their English language competency and their knowledge of English literature. Second, I saw myself as a model of teaching methods, helping would-be teachers acquire alternative strategies for teaching English. I felt I had the background I needed to help my student teachers comprehend Western (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) ideas of teaching methods in the curriculum content areas. I had academic background in ESL and had taught adult immigrants on a volunteer basis for a year. I had an abundance of experience at all grade and age levels from kindergarten to adult

learners in teaching the language arts of English. I have strong communication skills in my native English language. I had academic course background in improvisational drama, information acquisition, reading, writing and ESL curriculum and instruction, Canadian literature, poetry, and linguistics, as well as a personal interest in these areas. I looked forward to the challenge of teaching from a foreign language (FL) perspective.

I was confident of my competency to teach the courses, with one notable exception. That stemmed from my lack of background in the content area of English Literature. I had taken no courses at university specifically in English Literature! I was not well read in the area. When I opened the anthology texts which I was told constituted my curriculum resources, it was apparent that I would spend a great deal of time preparing for these lessons. The English Literature course was in fact the Literature of England. All of it - or so it seemed - from Beowulf and Chaucer to Bobby Burns in volume I, from Wordsworth to Oscar Wilde in volume II, and in volume III from John Galsworth to Sean O'Casey (Jia, 1992 printing, copyright date n/a). *Of the eighty English authors represented all were Caucasian, all dead, and all but four, men.*

I was more than a little trepidatious of the role students attributed to me as an authority on "English Literature". I did my best, learning as I went along, relying heavily on the Oxford Companion to English Literature! *But by January my students had worked up the courage to inquire as to what relevance this ancient history of Chaucer and his contemporaries had for them. I could not, in honesty, give a reasoned reply. It seemed that we were all bored with the course, both students and teacher less than inspired by my didactic approach, so different from the more learner centred, student participation teaching style of other courses they took from me.*

Yet, initially, I could not conduct my teaching in any other way. It was like being a first year teacher again! I felt so threatened by my lack of knowledge. Further, I understood that teachers in China are expected to stick to the text. Administrators do not expect innovative liberties will be taken with the basic curriculum, redesigning it according to any creative teaching plan. While pondering my alternatives, debating how I could proceed in the second semester, I turned to a study of poetry from volume III. We did a short unit to develop my students' ability in reading English "expressively", concentrating on phrasing and intonation patterns, poetry comprehension and analysis.

I was consistently positive, consistently encouraging, asking, modeling. I strove to ask questions that required critical, independent thinking and personal interpretation. I asked students to experiment with reading passages more loudly, more softly, more slowly, more quickly, as a chorus, with a partner, in groups, alone, to listen while I read. What differences did you notice among the different reading styles? Why is this idea

important, or trivial, in the piece? What does it contribute to the overall meaning? What does this statement mean? What else could it mean? What experience have you had that relates to this? Can you phrase that in modern English? What 's another way that it could be said? Why did people think that way then? How do people think about this in contemporary times? What has happened to society that we think differently now? Have the changes been positive? What should happen? What else could happen? Whose interests are served?

I became ever more frustrated as I experienced the impact of passive resistance. Why couldn't my students read as I expected they would? Did they simply not want to? Did they not like me? Did they think me a fool for questioning Chen Jia and the masters of English Literature represented in their anthology? Were they unable to think critically? Why did they refuse to talk about what they read, how they understood the readings?

And so this unit of study, while having taught me many things, raised many more questions than it answered. I could not understand why students had such difficulty reading in what I perceived to be an "expressive" fashion. I restrained myself from rolling my eyes in frustration as I witnessed the frantic searching in their texts for verbatim answers to my delving questions, answers that would not be there. I learned to dread their typical responses, "that is our way, that is our tradition, that would not be convenient". And I was frustrated by the resounding silence, or simple "No", or on occasion the shamed, eyes down, "I cannot answer", responses I was so often given when I would ask a question of a student whose hand was not raised as a voluntary respondent.

I knew intuitively by the elaborate responses given by voluntary respondents that others, too, must possess some portions of those answers. Yet I could not pull less than perfectly enunciated, clearly thought out, elaborate responses from these other students. Why, oh why, not? My relentless persistence in encouraging these highly intelligent students to give personal effort, credence and public expression to originating their own interpretations and understandings to the literature so often seemed to fall on deaf ears. I could not understand why, in the beginning, no one, then later two, and finally only eight of 28 students in the class, would volunteer responses to questions. I did not, at that time, take much comfort as I failed to calculate the 400% increase in voluntary participation!

Return to Personal Expertise (To Thine Own Self be True)

In my frustration I found myself using that poetry unit to give me the respite I needed to plan and organize a novel study unit, my personal forté from my days as a school

librarian. I had noted the intense pressure students felt to "get the right answer". In the poetry unit students learned that answering the comprehension questions supplied by the text was no longer enough because I encouraged them to be critical and creative original thinkers. I wanted them to develop confidence in the validity of their own thoughts about issues and cultural situations raised in the literature. I found my students were not accustomed to this teaching strategy and found it very confusing at first. By contrast, I felt I was really onto something!

I decided a novel study would benefit students by further developing student confidence in their own interpretive abilities (Parker, 1992). *My students were used to studying what was in their texts, and only that. As readers, we agreed that it was frustrating to read only bits of fine works. Students expressed their frustrated desire to get to know characters throughout the development of a story, and in so doing come to an understanding of people living in that time and place. This attitude reinforced my long-standing teacher-librarian's belief in the value of studying literary works as wholes rather than as excerpts.*

I informed students of the rationale for the novel study, telling them how we would proceed and why I thought it would be beneficial for them, verbally as well as in writing. They seemed comforted that we would be reading only those authors represented in the Chen Jia anthology texts whose worth was validated by virtue of their inclusion. Further, I believed a vital component of the unit was the writing of an interpretive critical research essay, including outline and bibliography. This would be their concluding assignment and the basis of my evaluation.

That weekend a student delegation came to reaffirm in-class complaints. They told me they had never been required to write such a paper, and it would be much too difficult for them. I believed then they were trying, yet again, to take advantage of my naïveté. Surely sophomore college students had written numerous research papers before! This would just be a review. On the contrary! As it turned out, the amount of instruction the task required bore out their whining pleas!

The novel study unit would be extensive and consist of three parts beginning with a review of the *elements of story and literary critique. We used five selected excerpts from the masters in Chen Jia's anthology, Volume II, rediscovering how an author wove story elements together to create a plausible whole. We began by examining the structure of story in the European tradition, exploring how an author uses conflict, setting, and theme with irony and humour to develop a plot line or character* (Perrine, 1966). *We re-examined the concepts of beginnings, middles and ends of stories, the way in which*

authors typically provide the reader with background, rising action, climax and denouement.

Next, we turned to analyzing a short but complete and authentic work, a piece of folklore in an illustrated children's book. I modeled a novel study, and the planning required for an analysis of character in a children's picture book I read aloud from the collection of materials I had brought with me to China. I taught informal and formal outlining to demonstrate the process of essay planning. I modeled my personal essay composition method, drafting and writing my essay on the board. And I taught the basic form for bibliography writing, showing how and why Westerners provide citations for their research.

Then, the class organized themselves into work groups of three or four, with each group studying a single copy of an illustrated children's book, again from my own collection. Contrary to my expectation, students were motivated in their learning both by the stories and the illustrations. They reacted positively to the use of folkloric content and "kiddie lit", as librarians would refer to it, for their teaching of cultural values. There were but few complaints that the authors were not famous, i.e. were not among those in their anthology. But we had time for only the briefest of comparisons between Chinese and Canadian book illustration styles. Ah, next time I would extend that focus.

For now my class planned, researched, outlined and wrote a short essay on setting. Their bibliography included citations for the children's book, an encyclopedia entry and at least one other source which provided information about the geography, political and/or economic circumstances from which the story was drawn. A similar, though more in-depth essay assignment, would conclude the culminating study of a complete, authentic English novel.

This method of studying literature was new to them. Nonetheless, students were motivated and intellectually challenged by the level of thought required to analyze and interpret literature independently. Now they found their explorations more rewarding than simply responding to vocabulary and comprehension questions from the anthology text despite the lack of reference points in the form of pre-formulated questions and pat answers secreted in the writing. We had to do it all on our own. Although there were no simple right or wrong answers, once my students realized I was receptive to their thoughts, non-judgmental, informative when I deemed it appropriate, and always personable, I was often amazed at analytical depths they had not displayed till now.

My efforts in teaching critical and creative thinking in the poetry unit were paying off. They seemed less hesitant to think independently, to respond uncertainly when I turned

their questions back on them. They were less hesitant, even willing, to state alternatives. Sometimes they would even ask me what a passage meant! They seemed less surprised when I refused to provide the answer. The sting of silent disrespect no longer pervaded the class. Some continued to be confounded, many were fascinated, a few only tolerant. They seemed less disappointed with my refusals to spoon-feed answers, perhaps seeing in my questions the reflection of my teaching style, rather than literary ignorance. I sensed that with our use of whole works of contemporary literature, many students had broadened their definition of the master authority on literature.

Workplace Interpersonal Relationships

Throughout the period during which I taught the structure of story using the anthology, and the process of essay writing, I was busy putting together the pieces of the real novel study, assembling three or four copies of each of several books for group study. Unbeknownst to my students, my search was not proceeding smoothly. At home it would have been so easy. I would simply have searched the shelves of the library of which I was in charge, and made one phone call to the Central Office clerk. In turn the clerk would have accumulated and forwarded to me sufficient copies of the books I needed from other school libraries in my school division through inter-library loans. I soon found out that is not the Chinese way! Although I did not realize it at that time, my view of the world of education support staff was clouded by expectations transferred to China from Canada.

I had been successful in locating one or two copies of several titles I could use in the unit at the Foreign Languages Lecturers' Library, Main Campus, next door to my home. Since I had developed a fairly good liaison with the Librarian, she agreed to allow me to borrow the books I wanted. Fortunately, she did not ask why I wanted more than one copy, nor whether they were for my own professional use as dictated by policy. She had previously made it abundantly clear to me that the collection's purpose was for teachers only. Taking the books home, I furiously set out to read a number of English classics so far omitted from my literary training.

In the course of my search, February by this time, I inadvertently discovered that there was a Foreign Language Student Library collection. Unfortunately, it was located some four kilometres' bus ride away at the Branch Campus where the two-year teacher diploma program was taught. Three years earlier a decision had been made to move the FL department to that campus. The plan commenced with moving the Foreign Language Student Library, which included all materials printed in Japanese, French, German, Russian and English. After moving the Students' Library, unknown

circumstances intervened, and the Faculty of Foreign Languages as a whole did not, in fact, move. Only the library retained its new location. Needless to say, I found this all worked to make things logistically most inconvenient.

I decided to take personal responsibility for gathering together the required books for a number of reasons. First, I had come to recognize this was the only way that I could truly know what titles were available, where and in what quantity. Second, many of my students were poor, and could not afford the bus fare to the Branch Campus. Third, the library was open to students only three hours per week, at times during which they were required to be in classes.

I inquired at the administration office of Branch Campus regarding access to the library. I was told that an appointment would be required to use it! Accustomed to open access to libraries in Canada where I had myself been a librarian, I was dismayed. I made the required appointment to visit the library after my next class in two days' time through the secretary of the Campus Director.

However, when I arrived for my appointment, I found the library closed because the librarian was away ill! Perhaps. But having learned something of the Chinese way by this time through other related teacher-planning experiences, I cynically believed it more likely that the Branch Campus librarian had somehow got wind of my fancy foreign, Western teaching plan. I very much resented what I perceived to be a complete lack of cooperation on the part of support staff, particularly male support staff. I did not realize then that the special relationship, referred to as guanxi, *is necessary to efficiently accomplish virtually every transaction.*

But I am a persistent woman. I made another appointment two days hence and proceeded to forgivingly pass the two hours' wait for the next bus home, somewhat warmed by the coal-burning heater and the spring sun shining through the staff room window as I marked papers. Even my own determination warmed me.

After class two days later, with hands numbed and freezing from board-writing in my unheated classroom with its broken windows, I trudged down the outdoor stairs, across the windy courtyard, up more stairs and down the hall to the Students' FL Library. Again, it was closed. Feeling discouraged, I made my way down the stairs, and along the hall to the office of the director of the Branch Campus to seek his help.

Director Feng's English was excellent. He is a very nice man. He had helped us get a Christmas tree in December. Coincidentally, in appreciation for his thoughtfulness, I had done the proper thing. I had given him a gift. We had guanxi. *After explaining my*

teaching plan to him and my problems in accessing the library collection, he courteously and eloquently agreed to help me. Director Feng found his assistant who accompanied me to the Library. Yes, indeed, it was closed!

Back we went to Director Feng's office. Conversation in Chinese ensued and I was told the Librarian had gone out to an early lunch, and was unavailable. Perhaps this was so. Director Feng agreed to communicate to the Librarian another appointment set for the next Monday morning at 9:00, just before my class at 10:00. Furthermore, Director Feng invited me to come to his office prior to going to the Library. What a considerate gesture, I thought. Silly me!

On the Monday as arranged, Director Feng escorted me to the Library. Finding it closed yet again, he led me down the hall to the staff tea room. Following a curt yet apparently cordial conversation in Chinese between Director Feng and the librarian, the latter returned to the library with me. He was unusually solicitous. He showed me where the English novels were located. I browsed the shelves. He asked if he could help. I signed out the books I needed. He boxed them up and I was ready to leave with them.

When the librarian suggested I have my class monitors come to Branch Campus to get the books for me I was torn. There were three small but heavy boxes plus my gym bag full of books. I really only needed 60 books, but I wanted my students to have some choice, and I had no desire whatsoever to revisit this rigmarole? Since the boxes would have to be hauled the length of a long corridor, down the stairs, across the windy courtyard, onto and off of the bus, across Main Branch Campus, up to my apartment, and finally to class, I was hesitant, but exhausted. It was with falling heart that I agreed to seek the assistance of classroom monitors in transporting the materials to my home for me via the inter-campus school bus. Despite victoriously locating most of the needed copies, I was beginning, finally, to feel defeated. Would I ever see these books arrive at my classroom?

Back at the Main Campus I made my request of the monitors, fearing that again there would be some very reasonable but finally insurmountable excuse to deny me the basic resources for the novel study. Neither monitor was enthusiastic, but what could they do? I was the teacher; they were the students. They agreed. To offset the burden of their task, I asked them to take charge of signing titles over to group members on Monday next when I expected to begin teaching my precious novel study unit. Having this degree of power, though insignificant to me, validated the status they felt was their entitlement, and they seemed reassured.

My colleague told me that most cities have a FL bookstore and suggested I might try looking there to find the additional copy or two of a few titles still missing. Indeed, downtown, twenty minutes away from home by bicycle, I bought a few, surprisingly cheaply. I was planning a getaway that weekend to a nearby tourist city. While there for a little rest and relaxation I was able to find the last of the books I needed. Immensely relieved, I looked forward to Monday morning.

Foreigner Persistence Pays Off

Bright and early on Monday, exactly as arranged, the class monitors arrived and helped me transport all of my materials to class. I began with a class discussion about how working in groups had been different from individual study. I introduced the novel unit verbally, and provided a detailed written assignment description. I encouraged them by saying that this novel study would be little different from what we had just finished doing twice - just longer and bigger. Then I did a short book talk on each of the titles. For the less able readers we had Doyle's The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, Wind in the Willows by Graham, Robinson Crusoe and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson. There were Defoe's Moll Flanders, Oliver Twist and A Christmas Carol by Dickens, and two very demanding Thomas Hardy novels. I even managed to find five female writers, the Bronté sisters, Charlotte and Emily, as well as Elizabeth Gaskell's Wives and Daughters and North and South, Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited and Doris Lessing's Grass is Singing. Other authors included David Lawrence, Bawden, Joyce Cary, E.M. Forster, Jack Higgins, W. H. Hudson, H. W. Wells, James Joyce, Austen, and three books by Joseph Conrad. I felt we had a fairly good cross section of English literary fiction considering all the difficulties.

The class broke into groups of threes and fours, depending upon the title they wanted to read, how many copies were available, and preferred work mates. The monitors officiously and efficiently took care of signing over the books. I provided study guide questions grouped according to story elements as well as some "starters" for journal entries. Students worked out a reading schedule so that each person knew what his/her responsibility would be to the group. I admonished my class that a group discussion of the assigned reading would be expected daily, and to keep up, but not to be too worried about looking up every unknown word. I tried to impress upon them the importance of using context to obtain overall meaning.

During the first class hour, students would discuss their reading to date. Then one member of each group would read a passage aloud, providing an impromptu preamble. In the second class hour, discussions would centre on the story and predictions about

what might come next. For ten minutes at the end of each class students recorded thoughts about their reading, things that troubled them regarding the book, and any personal experiences they had that aided understanding of the story. Only I would see these reader responses and they would not be graded though I would collect them weekly to comment on entries.

About half way through the month-long reading schedule, I handed out the essay assignment. Their essay analyzing setting and another story element of choice was to be at least five pages in length, and include a bibliography citing at least three sources. It was to include an introduction and conclusion. I encouraged them to write on conflict, main character or symbolism and to avoid plot. The essay was to be at least five pages in length, including an introduction and conclusion. Their outline or plan for writing, already marked once, would be re-submitted, showing changes. They could work cooperatively on the essay, but each group member must emphasize a different optional element. I helped them plan their writing by teaching several different outlining techniques and by modeling several alternatives I might choose from for my own essay. During the fifth and sixth weeks, we used our classes for essay planning, writing, editing and rewriting.

There were the usual problems about reading level, number of pages, and so on. The only complaint I had not expected, and it was a legitimate one, was that in many of the books the print was very small. Some of my students had less than 20-20 vision - like the story of Abe Lincoln, at age 22-25, they had spent many hours reading in poor light. Luckily, I was able to trade hard cover, larger print editions for the tiny print of the paperback copies but was otherwise unsympathetic, I'm afraid to say. I rationalized that a few more hours would not blind them.

In my years as a junior high teacher I had learned quick responses for limit testing complaints. The reading assignments were too long. (Just skim them, or break the reading up among group members.) They did not know how to write the journal entries. (I gave examples that complemented lists of focus questions.) They did not have time to look up all the words they did not know. (Use context. I gave examples and taught the strategy.) The book they'd chosen was too hard. (Choose another book, and/or another work group, but in that case you have to start over again. I had alternate titles available.)

I believed that, not unlike junior high youngsters back home, these students too lacked the self-confidence to venture into unfamiliar territory in their writing. At the same time that they wanted a different kind of teaching, they were frightened and resistant to change, perhaps fearing failure. Any reference to sexuality resulted in stony silence among the young men, and giddy self-conscious giggling among the girls. Students had

only to figure out whom they would read and whom they could and would work with. There was no getting out of reading a whole book in English by an English writer! There proved to be adequate choice, range of length and reading level. I felt this was a good, solid unit.

Only the organizing had been frustrating. Teaching it, even marking it, was a pleasure. For the Chinese with whom I came in contact through the course of this unit, the experience was definitely novel. For me, it was a study as much in matters Chinese as in literature! On one level of teacher practice I learned that painstakingly careful advance planning is essential for any novel teaching strategy. The extent of that planning is itself much more consumptive of both time and patience than would be the norm back home. And a contingency plan is necessary in the event events do not transpire as anticipated.

Ex Post Facto Reflections: Predictable Impacts

I continued to reflect as I began this research process. Then more fundamental questions emerged, questions regarding theory and research in the context of learning, language and teachers as well as questions about the foundations of language teaching, linguistics and educational theory in China (Stern, 1992).

To what extent is teachers' use of a didactic, authority based approach to teaching a strategy by which they compensate for inadequate content area expertise? Student responses to comprehension questions in the first part of the term were indicative for me of a lack of any real understanding of content. Responses only minimally paraphrased the author, or indeed students flipped pages frantically trying to find applicable text quotations. They provided no feedback to my alternative interpretive suggestions and refused to answer follow-up questions. Yet I feared the time, which I assumed would come soon, when students would surely question me on points of literary analysis. What were Chinese colleagues' feelings about the potential of student questions for which they do not have answers? I wondered how they coped with those content questions?

My students acknowledged boredom with the didacticism of my approach during the September-November introductory period. Yet they seemed less than satisfied with the more participatory learner-centredness in the poetry section which followed. At first they were even resistant to the oral reading exercises, though gradually they came to enjoy them. Still, I did not feel any significant increase in their respect for me, despite my own confidence in my relatively greater content knowledge. Why did my students not read with appropriate inflection and intonation rather than as if each word stood on its own and not as part of a sentence, a context? What effect on their greater level of

understanding and increased expressiveness in oral reading was attributable to repeated readings. Why did they seem more able to deeply understand poetry than prose, quite contrary to my expectations? What was it about that genre that enabled them to participate more fully? Could there be differences in Chinese and English rhetorical styles that they did not explain and I did not know or ask about?

Then, when we moved to folklore and children's story, despite their generally higher motivation and greater understanding, I remember being troubled by the demands of a few for works that were more intellectually stimulating. They accepted and enjoyed the study of story elements; consistently looking for the author's revelations of reality, especially symbolic realities, through the story elements. In many ways, I found their expectations for symbolism extreme. I resisted their insistence on its necessity for meaning-making, finding it akin to that of my university professors. I was amazed at the depths they expected, yet could not obtain from readings over which they poured, word by word, sentence by sentence.

When we returned, preceding the novel study, to reading and analyzing prose excerpts in their anthology texts, I found again that providing focus questions was of little help to my students. Yet what experience of life had they to draw upon? Many had not traveled outside the province. None had known passionate love, or lived independent of supervision. They continued to be unable to grasp surface text understanding; and I did not feel it was my role to simply provide deep meanings they sought. I reduced the cultural load of embedded text, when I perceived it, with explanations and definitions (Barnitz, 1986; Gajdusek, 1988). But I felt any deep understanding had to come from the students. I would ask the questions; they would provide their own answers.

As I learned more about communicative language teaching, I wondered if there was something about the history of their education that impacted their literary expectations. Why did they seem to expect there was always a correct answer, that I knew it, and would spoon-feed it to them? I did not understand why they refused to take part in discussions of alternative ways of interpreting the masters.

Why did my suggestion of a variety of possible answers or interpretations confuse and frustrate them? I too had been frustrated by my inability to entice them into sharing my passion for critique, for questioning. Why didn't they revel in my acceptance of their ideas, as my students back home had, and welcome the opportunities for input? Why had they no confidence in the relevance, the importance, the validity, of their own thoughts and interpretations of the literature?

These contradictions between prose and poetry, reading and understanding, answers and the role of questions in contributing to making answers, lead me to ponder what, or who, constituted appropriate literature as teaching resources as well as what constituted appropriate teaching strategies. What role did students see for themselves in the learning process? What was their responsibility for their own learning? Were there basic differences of expectation between teacher and student regarding our roles, teaching methods, content and learning process. What were their expectations of me in the role of Foreign Expert (FE) (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) *in language teaching and teacher education vis-à-vis Western teaching methodologies and curriculum content areas? Indeed,* what did they want from me *- not the didactic, yet not the participatory? I did not believe in the existence of one correct answer, and didn't have to give what they seemed to want. They could not give, nor ask, what I expected. What could I do to build bridges between the spaces that separated East from West?*

And then there were the problems of the research assignment. I was appalled that college students really had not done research. Oh, they knew how to find the masters' interpretations of their novels in Chinese literary analysis. But as for analyzing, or critiquing interpretations they found - why, they could not, would not, do that! Those few personal interpretations the very courageous among my students had stated in class were nowhere to be found in their written work. And they could not quote properly, instead copying full paragraphs, even pages, without citing sources, even purporting the stultified language as their own! Just as Fox noted in one of the first books I read, they did not understand the process of citing sources nor the necessity for doing so (1994).

Questions about protocol in accessing English language novels from the library perhaps caused me more stress than the problems of teaching it. Teaching problems I could deal with. But those cross-cultural differences in interpersonal professional relationships were almost beyond me. Looking back, perhaps if I had been more forthcoming in explaining my educational objectives and requirements for materials to my administrators before attempting to use the Library my efforts would have been less frustrated. On the other hand, perhaps administrators would have told me that the materials I needed did not exist. This possibility notwithstanding, how could I have become aware of the extent of the library collection before seeking administrative assistance?

Having been a librarian, I understood the possessive reluctance of the librarian in charge of the teachers' collection to lend materials from "her library". But I was appalled at the simple lack of availability of the Branch Campus librarian and the collection in what was supposed to be a students' collection. I was further surprised that, following Director Feng's conversation with this librarian, the latter became so very solicitous of me and my

needs. In similar circumstances, outside the bounds of Director Feng's immediate supervision, I would have done only what was necessary to fulfill the borrower's requirements. I fully expected the books, if they arrived, would be days late, mixed up, some perhaps missing. Instead they arrived on time, in perfect order, with the aid of class monitors who now were pleasant, willing and helpful, and who continued to be so.

This change in the attitude of previously reticent, resistant monitors together with my students' new willingness to participate in the learning process, led me to ask questions about the constituency of appropriate relations between teacher and student, teacher and class, teacher as curriculum designer? In my naïveté I did not realize the extent to which it is necessary to establish guanxi, *that special relationship between individuals who satisfy a need for the other, or present gifts in return for favours done, or with whom.*

Insights Gained

For a long time I thought my hassles were due to being a foreigner, that if only I had better understood how the infrastructures in education functioned, these frustrations of planning I was so unaccustomed to would have been easily overcome. However, Chinese friends both in China and now in Canada, advise me that, on the contrary, these are the sort of blocks laid in their paths every day. Unlike my Chinese colleagues whose paths are often successfully and effectively blocked, mine, as a foreigner, would likely not have been. Not knowing how the hierarchy of power structures functions, I persisted. Because I was a foreigner blocks were, in fact, removed for me!

When I returned home I continued to struggle to find personal understanding of my experiences. I sought both more depth and breadth so that I could understand the "why" of what worked and what didn't. It was apparent to me at the time that my persistence and adaptability were assets in accomplishing my teaching goals. The extent to which one must be ready, willing and able to adapt every aspect of what is known came as a surprise. Even in China I knew that I was not being asked to change deeply or permanently, rather only to adjust temporarily to changed requirements (Fox, 1994). But what was I asking of my students?

Teaching at that teachers' college in northern China I often did not understand my students' ways of learning and being. The feeling was mutual. They did not understand what role I expected them to play in their own learning processes. They did not understand how the expectations of my own role in their lives differed from the role played by their Chinese teachers. Nor did we understand how those different role

expectations impinged upon the relationship we could have with each other, in or out of class. Many of the teaching and living experiences I had that year, in that culture so different from my own were so perplexing that I continue to reflect upon them. It is that continuing process of struggle and reflection that brought me to this research.

The Research Questions

There was so much I needed to know in order to understand my time in China, to make sense of my experience. This research, begun a year after returning home, is my attempt to make sense of teaching successes and failures, joys and frustrations. I need to understand how we, Chinese students and FE, viewed our roles and relationships with each other in the language learning and teaching process. Through reflection, reflective writing and research, I sought to understand the roles we play and the relationships we may have with each other. The source of my teaching frustrations, and the issue driving this research, was our different pre-existent cultural schemata, the prior understandings, experiences and expectations, we brought with us.

In relation to teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) in the Chinese context, the following five questions of expectation and belief, of difference and similarity, regarding student and teacher roles and relationships, begged clarification. Specifically, to understand the role expected of a Canadian ESL/EFL teacher in a foreign context, I needed to discover:

1. what are the role expectations Chinese students had of themselves and their Chinese teachers of English,
2. what are the role expectations I took with me, of myself and my students,
3. what are the differences and similarities between our role expectations,
4. what are the relationships we can have with each other as implied by the roles we play, and finally
5. what are the impacts of those relationships on the delivery of language education?

With these questions firmly in place, I had to discern a research method that would render the rewards I sought - resolution of inner conflicts and understanding for future application. From the outset of this study personal reflection on my experiences of teaching English in China provided some clues to understanding. Reading about the experiences of others who had taught there and the research literature brought additional glimmers of light. Yet I also sought a more human connection - without speaking personally with real ESL/EFL teachers of Chinese students whose practice

intersected with my teaching experience I did not fully trust either my own perceptions or the literature (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

I sought out interview participants in hopes they would bridge that gap of trust. Intuitively, I felt Chinese nationals (ChNs) who had been students and teachers in Chinese teachers' colleges would provide insight into the Chinese view of teacher and student roles and relationship. I hoped other teachers who had worked as Foreign Experts in China would help me understand whether my frustrations were the result of personal or shared (in)experience. And finally, I believed seasoned Canadian teachers of Chinese students here in Canada might shed light on the spaces between understandings. I believed the gaps that existed, though I could not isolate them, would be bridged by understanding differences between Canadian immersion language learning and the Chinese context of EFL teaching. I hoped that building bridges of understanding between these gaps would enable me to draw implications for future practice.

Rationale and Significance

Writing narrative accounts of specific teaching events in China such as the one related above and in Chapter V provided some insights. They helped me see differences between past experience of teaching ESL in Canada versus EFL in China. In addition, I felt it would be beneficial to reexamine them after explicitly discussing the issues of the research questions above with other teachers who had experience with Chinese students. Such an exploration would help me discover whether other teachers shared any of my assumptions and experiences. Perhaps such an exploration would help me discover strategies that would make the teaching experiences of others who go abroad to teach English more fulfilling. Perhaps, through reflection and sharing with other teachers, I could come to grips with questions of cultural difference as they were reflected in particular incidents in the Chinese classroom.

I hope my discoveries will benefit the many native English speaking certified teachers (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) who are responding to the international demand for teachers of English (Wallace, 1991). At the very least, we are hired because, as native speakers of English we subconsciously carry with us, inherent in our language, our cultural values, attitudes and behaviours and knowledge (Byram, 1991). We are considered a vital resource in teaching English because of our English language competency, native accent, intimate knowledge of so-called Western or English language cultures, and access to innovations in teaching methodologies (Liu, 1988).

Language is the major human tool used to negotiate meaning and understanding among cultures (Long, 1987). Advances in language theory and pedagogy have brought about recognition that awareness of the target culture's values is integral to successful intercultural communication. We teachers are part of a global ESL/EFL 'industry' as the world moves to ever-larger trading blocks. As such, we are an integral part of the resource base for effectively teaching the cultural values of first-language English speakers.

During the year 1992-93 when I taught English as a Second Language (more accurately EFL) in an industrial city in northern China I found myself facing difficult challenges around the issues of teacher and student roles and our relationships with each other. These challenges arose from assumptions we made about what constitutes formal education, appropriate roles of teacher and student, appropriate relations between teacher and student, and, given those roles and relationships, appropriate teaching strategies. There were some fundamental similarities to bind us but the many differences and contradictions in expectation and belief together with the apparent scarcity of authentic teaching materials (Zhuang, 1984; Ford, 1988; Sampson, 1990; Wang, 1994) gave rise to innumerable frustrations. I came to respect that there are many ways of knowing, and of representing the knowing. This research represents the process I used in coming to some understanding of some of the ways of members of another cultural group and my relationship with them.

While traditional language teaching methods used by local teachers in many countries produce students who can read and write in English, these same students are unable to respond competently, spontaneously and appropriately in unrehearsed conversations and situations (Ting, 1987). Students' background knowledge of expected behaviours and communication patterns from their culture (C1) are often inconsistent with, even contradictory to, the expectations of members of the foreign cultural and linguistic group (C2) about which they are learning (Brick, 1991). A requirement that students memorize long text passages is a mainstay of Chinese traditional teaching. I, like most Western teachers, failed to credit this strategy's contribution to learning and knowledge transfer (Fox, 1994; Liu, 1988; Ting, 1987). Differences between our conceptualizations about what constitute knowledge, learning and literacy gave rise to gaps in understanding our roles in the language learning and teaching processes.

The Chinese Ministry of Education acknowledges that traditional teaching methods are not successful in producing competent English speakers. Thus, they have implemented a policy mandating delivery of language education by a communicative approach and are moving to teaching a SL in elementary school (CPC Central Committee, 1985; Ford, 1988; Li, 1984). Despite this policy change, considerable ambivalence prevails among

Chinese teachers and students about the feasibility of using a communicative approach to language teaching (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Li, 1984; Liu, 1988; Penner, 1995; Ting, 1987). Most Chinese teachers of English, past or present, do not use such methods. Neither college students nor their teachers have prior formal education experiences, experiential schemata, which enable them to acquire language learnings in the classroom from many communicative activities (Ting, 1987). Finally, institutional structures to support a learner centred approach to language teaching do not exist.

Integral to the relationships which may develop between and among students and teacher are the roles they believe are appropriate. In the interactive process of teaching and learning with the aid of a teacher, the teacher's relationship with students impacts success of teaching strategies and student cooperation in learning activities. Teachers like myself arrive at placements abroad with a set of beliefs, grounded in practical experience and theoretical course work. In North America since the mid-70's, the key pedagogical concept in language education theory, communicative competence, has emerged "as a central focus for new thought and fresh approaches" (Stern, 1983, p. 111). That philosophy of language learning assumes a partnering relationship between students and teacher in a learning community that is language-rich, mutually supportive and interactive. I viewed myself as a facilitator of language production for autonomous learners in a learner/practice/skill development-centred environment (Ting, 1987). I expected to provide access to a broad range of authentic learning materials and to design teaching/learning experiences that exploited those resources (Breen & Candlin, 1988).

This communicative approach to second language (SL) learning is well suited to the North American ESL situation. Social hierarchies are less rigid and teachers are expected to be less authoritative. Students are expected to participate actively as individuals who are independent and empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching materials from both inside and outside the classroom are plentiful and valid (Brick, 1991). I carried these educational values and assumptions with me to China.

They are inconsistent with realities of the EFL classroom in China and many other countries where FEs teach English (Fox, 1994; Ting, 1987). Although I could not know why at the time, intuitively I knew when my college class of 28 education students, in dress suits and dresses, sat primly and silently while I introduced myself, that some of what I *knew* would not fit there. The differences and contradictions in expectations of students and teachers regarding their roles, relationships, and the feasibility of communicative teaching strategies for teachers who anticipate teaching ESL/EFL abroad are the foci of this study. My paramount concern is the making of meaning in a

way that optimizes potential for positive Chinese student/FE relationships and effective student/teacher interactions in second language acquisition.

This research results first from a personal need and quest for understanding and meaning-making of experiences in China. Second, it reflects my desire to share those understandings and meanings with other certified teachers who may wish to teach abroad, to provide information, advice and perhaps enlightenment about potential areas of concern or frustration. I hope it will help them to be better prepared to adapt, and thereby increase their teaching success. "All of us, as language teaching professionals can, and even must, take on the responsibility for our own development. Everywhere there are signs that members of the profession are willing to shoulder that responsibility" (Wallace, 1991, p. 2) as we seek true cultural *exchange* (Stern, 1983).

Organization of the Thesis

The organization of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 commenced with a narrative which portrayed, more than any other single teaching experience I had in China, the broad range of issues that challenged me. Through this narrative, then, the context from which I came to the study was provided. Research questions to be studied were stated above, as well as the need and significance of the study. Although there is no single chapter dedicated to a review of the literature, information gleaned from readings is integrated within each chapter. You will read two narrative reflections in addition to Chapter 1's "The Chinese way " in Chapters 5 and 6. These personal reflections highlight issues that concerned me.

Chapter 2 sets out the research method and design. This is a qualitative study to produce personal grounded theory. Methods as well as data sources are triangulated in a search for meaning. Methods used were literature review, interviews with teachers and narrative inquiry into personal experience.

In Chapter 3 I examine the role of students in foreign language learning. I reflect upon my understandings of their experience in "The Chinese way", weaving in information from readings and interview data. I try to understand the impact that the interactions of students' socio-cultural history and existential reality have on their experience of teacher education.

The focus of Chapter 4 is the role of the English language teacher in China. Themes related to role expectation and student teacher relationship arose in the course of research and writing. The differences and similarities between Chinese English language teachers and Foreign Experts are explored. Teacher character, professional qualification and delivery of language education are topics covered.

Chapter 5, Foreign Expert and Student Relationship, is composed of the narrative, "Peanut butter: Sticking it together" and reflection upon that experience. It illuminates the impact incorrectly applied assumptions can have for the relationships between FE teachers and Chinese students. The experience made it clear to me that not all teaching strategies that are successful in Canada apply cross-culturally. Knowing what it is to be a teacher in the West was not sufficient information upon which to base assumptions for teacher/student interactions in another culture where expectations were quite different. This foray into teaching functional language through a communicative approach that adapts total physical response method was most informative.

Chapter 6, Implications for Future Research, briefly synthesizes what I have learned and draws implications for future research. The ability of FEs to deliver effective language education will be enhanced if teachers and students share perceptions that effective and purposeful teaching and learning has taken place. I close the thesis with "*On Reflection: Paradigm Shift Required*" which describes an experience I had as a high school student. It is analogous with the paradigmatic change I unwittingly expected my students in China to undergo in a very short space of time (Fox, 1994). It concludes my attempt to make personal meaning that will help me or other certified Canadian language teachers of EFL enjoy success in the context of positive interpersonal interactions.

Chapter II Research Methodology

Introduction

The painful discovery that "everything we do in the classroom is founded on a set of assumptions about learning and teaching, about knowledge, and about what counts as legitimate" (Newman, 1987) language learning experiences, provided little relief from the pain of my struggle to understand experiences I had in China. The questions of this research arose as a result of my naïve assumptions, applied universally. My discovery that they were indeed not universal did not provide any complete sense of resolution. I needed to grapple with particulars of differences and similarities of beliefs and expectations between my students and myself regarding our place in the language learning process. I needed to express my "story" in a way that probed events for deeper cross-cultural insights. The telling needed to be sufficiently broad-based to be useful to other educators who anticipate teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) where variations in particular cultural dynamics are probable. I trust that these understandings and resolutions will enable me and others more competently, confidently and effectively play our professional roles in relating with students.

This chapter explains the research process I used. I begin by discussing, in general terms, the nature of this qualitative study in the production of grounded theory. I then pursue a description of the triangulations used. First I discuss the research methods - literature review, interview and narrative inquiry. Triangulation of data sources is discussed under sub-headings regarding personal reflection on experience and interview participants - Chinese nationals, Canadian nationals, and Foreign Expert teachers. Issues of ethics, assumptions, limitations, transferability and credibility are addressed finally.

The Research Process

When we know what structures underlie bodies of knowledge we better understand the problems faced in communication. Knowledge which developed from one concept gave rise to new sources of complexity within each sub-concept and extended to other related

subject areas. It often seemed that concepts I was trying to explore were so numerous and so complex that it was impossible to mesh them in such a way that one set of data made "sense in light of the other" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 509) and retained meaning for a classroom context. I needed to represent theoretical constructs I used to conceptualize the study (see Figure 1) to ensure that I maintained a "self-critical attitude toward how [my] own preconceptions affect[ed] the research" (Lather, 1991) as new concepts and new bodies of inquiry came forth in a potentially infinitely expanding spiral (Schwab, 1964).

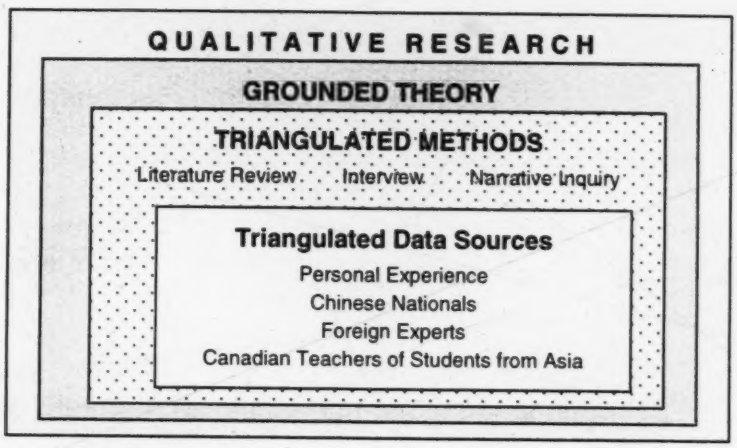

Figure 1Research Triangulation

I found a grounded theory approach to qualitative research fit my inquiries because it helped me find personal meaning from the complexities of teaching in a foreign country where I did not have prior knowledge of the language and culture (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It also helped me resolve my questions and misunderstandings about experiences in China in a finding of subjective truth. The approach facilitated my ability to ground theory arising from personal knowledge and sensory experience, which is, as Clandinin and Connelly say, the "starting point and key term for all social science inquiry" (1994, p. 425]. Our society's ways of knowing and interpreting reality provide us with relative truths as our language and culture interact to influence our perceptions of what is "real" and "known". Qualitative scientific research into what I "knew" to be true produced my theory.

Those questions became more focused over the course of time on differences and similarities in role and relationship expectations and beliefs among Chinese students and Foreign Experts. No one method alone could provide understandings to my very real questions with the scope, breadth or depth I desired. Some questions arose directly

from my Chinese teaching experiences, others from the historical foundations of language education in China (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Schwab, 1964; Stern, 1992).

My Canadian view of reality, my cultural schema, provided me with a set of assumptions about what constitutes knowledge and learning[1]. I needed to integrate my personal philosophy of teaching, and assumptions about knowledge and learning, with issues of legitimacy in formal second and foreign language education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Newman, 1987). I felt a reflective, interactive process would facilitate the formulation of theory for effective EFL practice in other cultural contexts as well. Regardless of whether there is only one objective truth, or whether truth is relative to situations and perspectives on them, triangulation of methods and data sources could only aid in the construction of a personal reality (Denzin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lather, 1991). Loyalty to the phenomena, the culture under study and the participants themselves was a greater concern than that to any particular methodological or theoretical scheme (Altheide & Johnson, 1994).

Triangulated Methods

I believed employing "multiple data sources, methods, and theoretical schemes" (Lather, 1991) would increase study validity. It is a research construct that demanded vigorous self-reflexivity, a qualitative "counterpart to intersubjective agreement" (Mathison, 1988, p. 15). Triangulation of methods included a review of the research literature, semi-structured interviews and reflection through personal narratives (see Figure 1). These methods, discussed in detail below, form part of a continuing process of repetition and recycling for meaning making (Clandinin, 1991). "It is the internal and existential whole that is ultimately of interest" (Clandinin, 1994).

Literature Review

Reviewing the literature helped evaluate my experience and ascertain issues, problems, obstacles and findings disclosed by previous studies (Eisner, 1991). I have chosen to integrate learnings from the literature with those from narratives and interviews rather than as a comprehensive section unto itself. Since a basic premise of this work is holistic integration of knowledge and data, this seemed a consistent course of action. I

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[1] "Knowledge and learning" are further discussed and defined in Chapter 3 under "Knowledge, Learning and Literacy".

mention here those authors whose work I found especially useful as I sought to update my knowledge of SL teaching/learning theory, obtain cross-cultural information about Chinese people and their system of education, and draw implications for future practice.

I studied language acquisition theory and the applied research of contemporary western SL theorists. Breen and Candlin (1988) and Richard-Amato (1988) set the stage with their overviews of the field. Stephen Krashen (1982; 1983; 1984; 1992; 1994), H.H. Stern (1983; 1992), Richards (1986; 1990) and Widdowson (1990) further contributed to my understanding of what it means to be an ESL/EFL teacher who subscribes to a communicative approach. The comments of Brown (1986), Littlewood (1985) and Oxford (1994) regarding differences between learning a second and a foreign language, and McKay (1992) regarding other specific motivations for learning English, were helpful.

I studied current trends in Chinese language education through the writings of Ruth Hayhoe (1987; 1989), Gloria Sampson (1990), Lynn Paine (1990), Jean Brick (1991), Yen Ren Ting (1987), Xijan Liu (1988), Xiaoju Li (1984), Jing Bin Zhang (1995) and Jiaying Zhuang (1984) as well as other Chinese authors. Some of the literature takes an impositional stance, delineating how the Chinese need to change *their* ways of knowing to fit the beliefs of others about education (Ford, 1988; Kretschmer, 1994). Notwithstanding those views, the autobiography, *Wild swans, three daughters of China* by Chang Jung (1991) and James Clavell's novel, *Tai Pan: A novel of Hong Kong* (1966) helped me appreciate the Chinese point of view.

Others comment on the progress and process of implementing communicative teaching in China and what it means to be a Chinese learner of English (Brick, 1991; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Hui, 1997; Li, 1984; Liu, 1988; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford, 1994; Penner, 1995; Ting, 1987). Understandings and assumptions related to education, teaching and learning are indeed very different for Chinese people and "westerners". The especially informative work of Trimmer and Warnock (1992) and Fox (1994) influenced the study throughout.

Integral to this study were my attempts to understand how successful FE teachers in China might "go about seeing, explaining, and describing order in the world in which they live" (Bogdan, 1982, p. 37). To assist the expatriate teacher in adapting to the complexities of a foreign context, I found the works of Richards (1994; 1990; 1994) and Wallace (1991)on reflective teaching and SL teacher education informative.

The use of story and literature was integral to my practice in China. The works of Egan (1986), Valdez-Menchaca (1992) and Thomson's collection of essays (1992) furthered my awareness of the value of story in its various genres for an EFL context. Others by

Byram (1994; 1991; 1991) and Sage (1987) together with works edited by Buttjes (1991), Parker (1992) and Carter (1989) formulated my understanding of the linguistic and ideological bonds of culture with language. These works were instrumental to understanding my role and in-class relationship with students.

Each reading furthered my efforts to find ways of comparing my own experiences with those of others expressed in the theoretical literature. I felt mired in a belief that discovery through personal experience was "as critical a process as verification [through the literature] in both the doing of science and the sociology of knowledge" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 504). I discovered that I possessed a "vast body of tacit knowledge" (Mathison, 1988). But I learned also that portions of my interpretations were based on false consciousness, incorrect assumptions and missed opportunities. I took some solace in Lincoln's reassurance that one's realities are pluralistic, sometimes distorted, sometimes conflicting interpretations of the environment (1990). I turned to the experiences of others in interviews for their perceptions.

Interview

I needed to compare my beliefs with other real people who shared facets of my experience as I tried to further the process of reflexivity (Lather, 1991; Spradley, 1979). "The ability to tap into the experience of others in their own natural language, while utilizing their value and belief frameworks, is virtually impossible without face-to-face and verbal interaction" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) in personal conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Clandinin, 1994; Lather, 1991; Mishler, 1986). I felt that interviews would provide deeper meaning of my own experiences by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences in the ways teachers of Chinese students view their role, and how these conceptualizations of student and teacher role influence relationships.

To ensure pluralistic sets of values that would "ground inquiry and [data selection] in the multiple perspectives" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of ESL/EFL experience, I invited teachers to participate in an interview with me. I had been a student in both grade school and university in Canada. I had taught English at a teachers' college in northern China and I had taught ESL to adults in Canada. Given those categories of experience, and as the researcher, I had an "holistic understanding of the project itself, its history, its intentions and the ongoing relationships among issues examined" (Mathison, 1988).

Identification	Sex/ Age	Education	ESL/EFL Teaching Experience
Chinese Nationals (ChNs)			
Zhi Hui	M/31	China, M.A., English literature translation Alberta, Ph.D., Secondary Education, SL education	4 years college level, 8 years overall, at a Teachers University in northern south China city
Ai Ci	M/37	China, B.A., English Alberta, M.Ed., Ph.D., Elementary ESL	5 years, beginner and intermediate EFL in north China
Foreign Experts (FEs)			
Jasmine	F/43	M.Ed., Adult Basic Literacy	1 year at north China teacher's up-grading college, 1994-95 junior/senior middle schools teachers taking 2 year up-grade
Farr	M/55	Ph.D. Education, elementary social studies	1 year at north China teacher's college, 1984-85
Canadian Teachers of Students from Asia (CTSAs)			
Stan Yew	M/30	Alberta, M.Ed., Adult ESL	2 years, adult post-secondary ESL university preparation
Lydia	F/45	Alberta, M.Ed., ESL Curriculum and Instruction	20 years community based ESL adult post-secondary ESL university transfer preparation

TABLE 1 CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

The six teachers I interviewed shared some common ground with me (see Table 1). Parallel with my experience, ChNs had been students and teachers in Chinese middle schools and teacher training institutes. Canadian certified teachers had also taught in China as FEs. Canadian ESL teachers worked at the time with students here in Canada who are primarily from Asian countries. Table 1 above assists in clarifying parallels, diversity and integration of teacher experience. I hoped bridges between our shared experiences would provide information that supplemented, corroborated or contradicted my own (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Conversations with Canadian teachers showed we shared common experiences and perceptions of teacher and student roles for our context. As I triangulated the knowledge and experience of interview participants with

data from the research findings in the field, my knowledge and understandings about things Chinese and teaching English in a foreign culture grew, and continues to grow.

I consciously brought together "groups that are different in some respect and search[ed] in retrospect for the factor[s] that brought about the differences" (Cohen & Manion, 1980). All participants were qualified and experienced teachers holding at least a Bachelor's degree. All had ESL theoretical background in communicative language teaching (CLT). All had taught English language to adult Chinese students, either in Canada or as a FL in China. As such, all had some awareness of Chinese culture and education. Yet each group was different from the next, and each individual different from his/her counterpart.

Through a process of data analysis and comparison - drafting, writing, re-writing and recycling data through member checks - strange emergent patterns, designs and understandings emerged from the data (Clandinin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lather, 1991; Schön, 1991). Narrative threads, tensions and themes that came to the fore gave play to the assumption, as they did to essayists in Schön's *The Reflective Turn* "that there is an underlying sense to be discovered and that it is [our] business as researchers to discover it" (1991, p. 5). Interview participants lead me to reflect on my understandings of their understandings. The inductive analysis and contextual interpretation of the data permitted me to see both cause and purpose in my foreign language teaching practice. Therefore, practical realities, dialectically conceived, were the starting points of my inquiry (Clandinin, 1994; Lather, 1991).

General interview questions about beliefs teachers held regarding their role as language teacher and the relationship they could have with their students provided guidelines to keep me focused. Since the focus here is the making of holistic meanings, preformulated questions were kept general. Depending upon the context of their experience, participants were asked the following framework questions which guided the interview process. Of Zhi Hui and Ai Ci, Chinese teachers of English, and Canadians who had taught in China as Foreign Experts, Jasmine and Farr, I asked:

1. What are/were your expectations and beliefs regarding the role of
    a) Chinese students learning English language?
    b) Chinese teachers of English language?
    c) the expatriate teacher of English language?

Regarding the relationship between teacher and student, I asked:

2. What are/were your expectations and beliefs regarding the relationship between
    a) the Chinese English language teacher and his/her students?

b) the expatriate English language teacher and his/her students?

Stan Yew and Lydia, FEs, were also asked:

3. What do you believe is the role Chinese students expect you to play?
4. What do you believe is the relationship Chinese students expect to have with you?

Questions asked of Canadians teaching ESL/EFL in Canada were much the same. However, since they had no contact with Chinese teachers of English language, questions 1b and 2b were omitted for purposes of their interviews. I requested that they focus responses on their Asian students (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) who constitute the majority in their classes, with special reference to Chinese.

In addition I asked all teachers

5. What teaching methods, activities and resources do/did you use/favour.

I felt responses to this latter question, though not central to the study, would help me understand how beliefs about the language teacher's role and relationships with students impacted teaching theory and practice in and out of class. Teaching methods, activities and resources one chooses impact upon and are influenced by perceptions of one's role and the relationships one has with students. Whether one teaches by an audio-lingual "mim-mem" approach vs. asking students to write and perform a skit, relies on explication to provide cross-cultural information vs. manipulating the classroom context to provide authenticated opportunities for cross-cultural participation, reflects role beliefs and influences relationships. Hearing about teacher preferences would help me understand the extent to which teacher practice was consistent with stated beliefs and how teachers adapted their philosophy of language education to the constraints of their practice context (Johnson, 1992; Richards, 1994).

I took certain interpretive liberties in the process of interviewing and transcribing the interviews. Attempting to see with an "enlightened eye" (Eisner, 1991) meant being open minded to my own mistakes, misconceptions, and surprises in different types and varieties of data. I sought elaboration or clarification through supplementary questions. These were included in the respective interview transcript which was submitted to each participant for a "member check" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 316). The member check gave participants the opportunity to "read" what they had "said" during the interview, and delete, alter or add to words spoken. The member check helped me remain loyal to participants' intentions, the phenomena of the study and the cultural context (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Information of substance resulting from

member checks appears as footnotes to relevant questions. Otherwise, interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Participants' requested changes and additions were added to the original transcript. Where these constitute more than editorial changes, they are shown as such with underlining in the text. I took notes on interview data and divided them into sub-categories so that each participant's remarks regarding foci of this study, student role, teacher role, the relationship between teacher and student and teaching strategies were grouped together. As the study evolved, I rejected the notes in favour of paraphrases of and quotes from particularly informative responses (Clandinin, 1994).

Narrative Inquiry

Data from the interviews provided the formal beginnings of the research. I did not realize, upon returning to formal study in the '90's, that it could be possible to use only reflection upon personal experience as a valid source of data in a narrative inquiry. Anticipating the study, I lamented that I would be required to take part again, as in my undergraduate years, in a politic of method with one of two equally distressing effects. I expected I might be required to so abstract the complexity of my experience by philosophizing that it would end up being meaningless, instead of meaning-making, for a classroom context. Alternatively, I would be forced to reduce its multiple levels to minute psychological and physical tasks (Eisner, 1988).

Therefore, I was very much encouraged to learn that education researchers are prepared to argue for the integrity of personal experience as field data (Clandinin, 1994; Eisner, 1988). I am gratified to have been encouraged in the difficult task of analyzing that which was ultimately of interest to me - the holism of my experience. I doubt that I would have been allowed to research in this way in my field of study in 1979 when I obtained my first degree. Thus, I join forces with others who find instead that "one of the common laments of those who focus on experience in all its messy complexity is that they lose track of the forest for the trees and find it hard to draw closure... (Clandinin, 1994, p. 416).

Through an ongoing process of living and telling, reliving and retelling, my interpretations of the original experiences in China began to change. Part of the research responsibility has been an ongoing attempt to integrate the troubling succession of situations which emerged in my personal narrative reflections with what I was learning from the readings and interviews. Initially, my teaching experiences in China were drafted only as personal self-explorations in narrative form. Through the writing of those narratives, my life

experiences from before, during and after China, began to mesh - a temporal continuity was established (see Figure 2). The isolated moments of situations merged into this single whole: "without continuity, there is no such thing as experience" (Clandinin, 1991, p. 261).

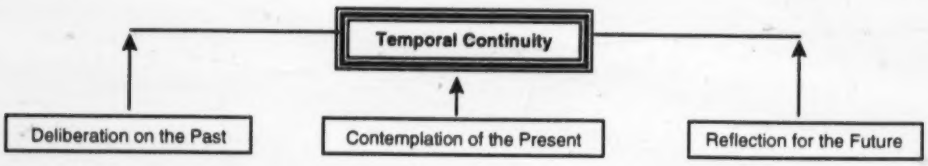

Figure 2 Temporal Continuity

I have deliberated upon past experience, in contemplation of the present, as I reflect for a future of changed and 'new teaching stories' (Clandinin, 1991). This process has helped me see more clearly the contribution of temporal continuity to experience.

I explored the socio-cultural history of student and teacher roles as they contribute to existential reality and internalized experience (Figure 3). Through temporal continuity, student and teacher interactions formulate socio-cultural role expectations. Again, a meshing occurs, as socio-cultural expectations combine with existential reality in creating internalized experience. In the context of present time, existential reality is impacted upon and formulated by external conditions of the economy, policy and the environment.

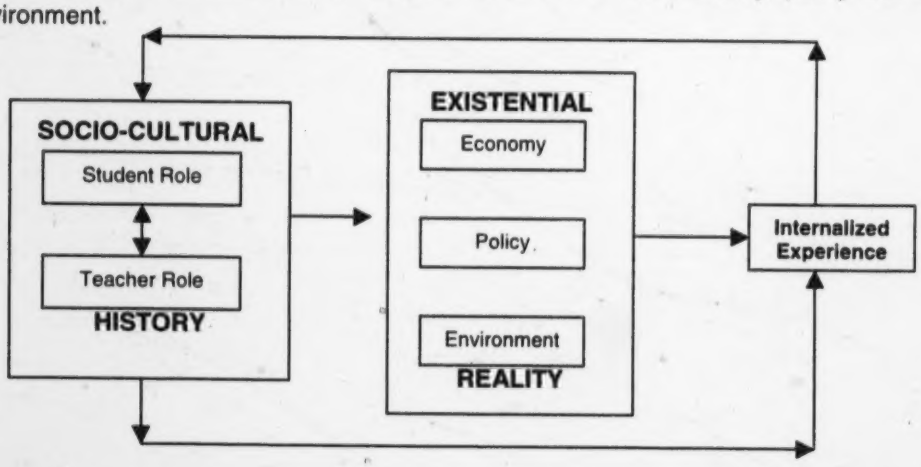

Figure 3 Internalized Experience

Finally, to understand the complexity of narrative inquiry, one understands the integration of all of the foregoing merging yet again (Figure 4). My experiences of the

past and those ongoing, intersected with my perceptions of student experience while in China. Then, in an ongoing way, those experiences intersected with those of authors in the literature and interview participants. My internalized experience of teaching events in China is composed of the intersections of all of these. Now that integrated whole is the "telling" you are participating in at this moment. This is the creation of yet another set of situations and experiences in the cycle.

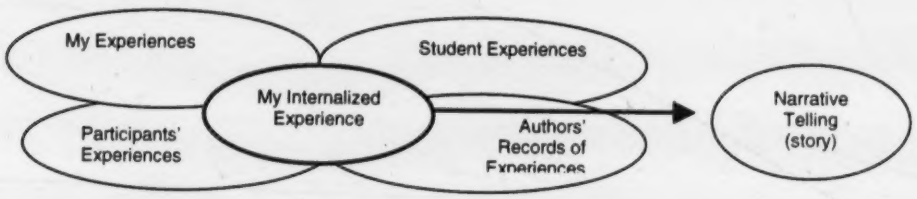

Figure 4 Interactions that Produce Narrative Tellings (story)

Thus, we are returned through the continuous passage of time to the ongoing cycle which forms our experience of "reality" (Figure 2). Therefore, at the internal level I had to focus my attention first as teacher and now as researcher

1. on my internalized experience of situations,
2. on how students experienced my experience, and finally
3. on how you, the reader, will experience my accounts of those events, as you, in the endless cycle, add this to your life experience.

That internalized experience is composed of my ability, in narration, to respond to questions of my feelings in the telling, the moral tone of the telling and the teaching, my esthetic, as well as prior experiences to which the one told of relate, and so on (Clandinin, 1994).

For example, by way of clarification, I offer situations described in "The Chinese way". In the continuous passage of time, my experiences as a high school English student and as teacher-librarian/junior high English teacher of novel studies formed my perception of my role as a teacher (my socio-cultural history). That socio-cultural historical role interacted with my existential reality as a FE in China. The interaction of all these factors together were relevant to the way in which events in China evolved, were internalized as experience and retold here.

For my students in China, though they had not lived it, events of the Cultural Revolution, as a facet of *their socio-cultural* history, were relevant to their *existential experience* as my students. Their instrumental need for English competency to further career

prospects, is a facet of their economic and political existence. My attempts to further that instrumental motivation to integrative motivation, to learn about other cultures through English as *internal* experience, are aspects I had to consider (Buttjes, 1991; Byram, Morgan, & colleagues, 1994).

Further, I needed to consider the reader, "what you were doing reading this material, for what purpose, what sense it will make" (Clandinin, 1994, p. 416) to you. "Existentially, questions arise about the person to whom the [event] is told, what it is in [our] relationship that makes the telling worthwhile, who [we] are and what kind of life [we] lead, the difference this makes to the telling, and so on (Clandinin, 1994). But, in the final analysis, it is my intentionality that defines the starting and stopping points as I constantly redefine my purpose. I have endeavoured to understand levels of that "messy complexity" (Clandinin, 1994, p. 416) as experienced by students in their roles and by teachers in their roles (chapters 3 and 4, respectively).

As the narrative inquiry process of analyzing interview data progressed, I found that three outcomes recurred: convergences, inconsistencies and contradictions. I continually returned to my own internalized experiences and insights gained from interpreting my personal stories (Figure 4). I found, indeed, that the interviews alone did not provide the depth or breadth of understanding for the research goals I had in mind. It is ironic that initially I could not trust the personal and implicit understandings that personal experiences provided of fundamental differences between Canadian and Chinese views of education. Nonetheless, deep understanding required that interview data "be filtered through knowledge gleaned from the immediate data" (Mathison, 1988) of my experience, the context, and the larger world.

Triangulated Data Sources

Narrative inquiry method enabled me to develop understandings of the multiple levels of experience. Insights gained through the experience of the authors in the literature and interviews with teachers helped me trust use of my own experience in research. It was only as I came to the writing that I realized the significance and essential nature of my own experiences as a means by which to dig for deeper meanings. My experiences when combined with those of others facilitated my ability to generalize educational impacts from incipient narratives, or restory past events to understand them in changed ways, and thus create new stories for the future. I understood then that these stories, as part of a qualitative research matrix, assisted me in understanding and re-defining teacher and student roles and relationships (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Personal Reflections on Experience

To obtain this level of enlightenment through narrative inquiry I needed to reflect and deliberate upon the substance of my experiences, representing the whole as was appropriate to gain personal and grant reader understanding. I bore in mind Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) three cautions regarding those events selected as being significant enough to warrant analysis.

One may choose to burrow deeply into the event's emotional, moral, and esthetic qualities to ask why the event is associated with the feelings it evokes, and what the origins of those feelings might be. In "The Chinese way" it was important for me to understand the origin of my feelings as they arose from other events in my personal history. What caused me to feel frustrated at students' lack of response? Why did I feel wronged when the librarian was unavailable for his appointments, that support staff, especially men, were evasive or uncooperative? Why did I feel that students were unjustified in their complaints? Why, when students were incompetent at comprehending short passages of prose, did I think study of a whole classical literary work could result in a positive learning experience?

One might examine the event's holism, broadening it in an effort to generalize that an event recalled is transferable, and can be used to support a general comment about a person's character, social values, cultural way of life, or intellectual climate. "Peanut butter: Sticking it together" (Chapter V) was selected because, from among several related teaching experiences, it best supports statements in the research literature regarding the inappropriacy and lack of transferability of certain ESL teaching strategies. It is indicative of how differences in people's social character and values regarding educational appropriacy impact the potential for learning.

Finally, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that the researcher may examine personal experience to understand past events in changed way[s] to create new stories for the future. How can the event as described be used to "create a new story of self which changes the meaning of the event, its description, and its significance" for the story being attempted? In "On reflection: Paradigm shift required" (Chapter 6) I look way back, to my adolescence, at a learning experience in high school, and relive it. I try to understand what it meant to me at that time in history, what it means now as transposed against the experience of my Chinese students, and the effect it can have on my expectations of students of EFL abroad.

Recording the Experience

These narratives were first drafted after I had been home from China for more than a year's time. While relatively vivid in my memory, the restorying was sometimes

prompted by the knowledge of others in the literature, colleagues and interviewees. Through selection and analysis, I better understood my own practice and discovered sense in that of others (Schön, 1991). My changing perspective became a legitimate medium through which interview, literary and personal narrative data are mediated. It is only through this filter that I could perceive and interpret data in search of differences that created gaps, spaces to be filled by bridges of understanding, and similarities that bind me with my students.

I knew that experiences and perceptions of conceptual phenomena described in my narratives existed. However, I found descriptions of them as "raw sensory experience is, if not meaningless, next to it" (Clandinin, 1994). Without reflection, inquiry, interpretation and analysis what could they be used for, what could I learn from them? As a research practitioner I was mandated to develop learned acts of the mind crucial to perceptive educators skills in data collection, recording, analysis, and narrative report writing (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Eisner, 1991),. Knowing situations involved acquiring information about myself, the research process and organizational and individual impeti. I had to be aware of my approach and presentation style, my role and social fit with participants in the process, i.e. the level of trust and rapport we had. Every significant aspect of experiences selected had to be descriptively recorded, relived, retold, for the purpose of analysis and critique for future action (Clandinin, 1991). Gaining self-awareness is a very complex and difficult process.

To tell those stories with an "enlightened eye" (Eisner, 1991) and a sharpened pen that could create a transaction among participants, researcher and reader (Rosenblatt, 1978), I needed to learn how to reflect productively and pragmatically about the subtle yet "skillful actions of everyday practice" (Schön, 1991). I needed to remember knowledge that was implicit in body language, interpersonal and situational ambiances, in situations themselves and to obtain meaning from omissions and commissions. I attempted to understand knowledge that had been tacit, known and lived without words, without conscious thought because I needed to understand what motivates me to believe that I know what I know, to think, decide and do as I do (Mishler, 1986) (Schön, 1991).

I have tried to enhance my writing with "expressive, artistically influenced and phenomenologically focused language" (Eisner, 1988, p. 18) in the crafting of these experiences and my reflections upon them, accurately, effectively, vividly and succinctly. I attempted to retain linguistic marks of the personal, the concrete, knowing that only through my individual identity would come education as an individual in a social process (Clandinin, 1991). I had to find, in the representation of each experience, the critical balance of both temporal and historical chronology, particularizing what was brought to it

from continuously accumulating prior experience. I tried to find a balance between depth and breadth in the writing, concreteness of personal representation, scientific economy, selectivity and situational familiarity. Thus, I could efficiently exploit the passage of time, use critical reasoning and engagement to alternately reframe my experiences of the world (Clandinin, 1991; Schön, 1991) and simultaneously mediate the "generic demands of science" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in discerning "truth".

My hope is that, in attempting to fulfill the recommendations of authors cited above, in knowing my experiences and writing the reflections, I will thus enable you to participate in both my turmoil and my triumphs. I hope you find, as I have, that my descriptive crafting increases your ability to understand more fully. I hope our struggle to identify patterns that enable interpretations which facilitate effective teaching of English abroad is enabled by skills I have acquired for "observation, description and analysis of what practitioners already know or how they already learn in the context of their own practice" (Schön, 1991, p. 5).

You, as reader, are participating in a transaction of this symbolic interpretation of text, inscribing your meanings in the creation of an interpretive process. My stories will in some small way become part of your life's story. The temporal nature of these experiences, the writing and the reading interact with the language I have used to create interpretive possibilities (Denzin, 1994). The process of recording those experiences in words on paper allowed me to hold them still in time and mind. Holding them static enabled me to use "reflection and deliberation, methods of practical inquiry, [as] springboards for thinking of narrative and story" (Clandinin, 1991, p. 263) as research data. I trust that through the writing, you, the reader are empowered to engage in the text and take understandings from it. If I have been ethical and thorough in my research and subsequent teaching practice, this process will have changed me, and us (Lather, 1991).

Interviews

While participants interviewed shared broad expanses of common ground with me and with each other, their specific experiences and differences including culture, race, age, gender, personality, comfort level and professional experience ensured a range of interpretive possibility (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Clandinin, 1994; Mishler, 1986). My work in China had brought me into contact with Chinese education culture (Spradley, 1979). I interviewed Chinese cultural informants because their beliefs and expectations of teachers, and the relationship students expect to have with that person, are a major focus of this research. I interviewed others who, like me, had worked in China as FEs. I

was interested in their beliefs and expectations, the roles they played and relationships they developed with students. Because I am a Canadian teacher of English Language Arts and had also taught ESL in Canada to adults from Asia, I shared ground with CTSAs. I needed to know to what extent our understandings about Asian learners and our philosophies about language education were shared. It seemed at the outset that the beliefs of CTSAs would provide bridges spanning gaps of understanding between FEs and Chinese students.

Throughout the interviews I wanted to maintain a conversational tone which would yield both depth and breadth of information. Therefore, the sequence and specific content of questions were mutually guided by my intentionality and interviewees' determinations of appropriacy and relevance (Clandinin, 1994). I believe that each respondent answered questions truthfully and to the best of their ability. I came to realize the multiplicity of my own reality as each participant revealed "the unique, the singular, the idiosyncratic, the deviant, the exceptional, the unusual, the divergent perceptions of individuals, as they live or lived the experience[s]" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 157).

The various paths trod in each interview provided significant data for analysis. Each of the six participants had been asked similar, though not the same questions. I would examine only those experiences and only that information that intersected with my own practice as expressed in the narratives, searching for similarities and differences by comparing beliefs of:

1. Chinese nationals with Canadians teaching ESL learners who come primarily from Asia,
2. Chinese nationals with Canadians as FEs in China, and
3. Canadians teaching ESL learners primarily from Asia with Canadian FEs in China.

In even a pre-emptory scanning of the nine hours of transcript data, it was easy to see that "only the most central issues in one's research warrant the thorough probing implied by triangulation" (Wolcott, 1990).

Chinese Nationals

From ChNs, I sought to understand what being a student and teacher in the Chinese education system means. From these cultural informants, I would explore what is expected from Chinese English teachers as compared with expectations of FEs hired to teach English in Chinese teacher universities (Spradley, 1979). Zhi Hui and Ai Ci had been students of both FEs and Chinese teachers of English. As well, they had taught English while in China. I felt that the values they hold, their attitudes toward, and beliefs

about behaviours of people involved in education, were integral to my process of meaning making. By identifying similarities and differences in expectations, I hoped to be able to understand why given aspects of foreign teacher practice were or were not effective.

I had some prior acquaintance with both Chinese respondents, and we were able to talk quite comfortably together. I chatted with Zhi Hui in the library at his home, and with Ai Ci in my office. We did not feel any time pressure. Zhi Hui is a male aged 31 who, on arrival in Canada as a graduate student, held a Masters Degree in English language translation from a major north China teachers' college. At the time he was a Ph.D. student in secondary level SL education. In China he had taught ESL for four years at the college level, and for eight years overall. Ai Ci, a male aged 37 years, held a Bachelors degree in English FL from a major teachers' university in northern China and had taught ESL for five years on arrival in Canada as a graduate student. He had completed a Masters degree and Ph.D. in ESL in Elementary Education in Canada.

I believed the views of Zhi Hui and Ai Ci would shed considerable light on the practice of teaching ESL/EFL in Chinese teacher education programs. With their exposure to Western education and values, it was these teachers above others whom I felt might question their assumptions to illuminate the potentially invisible inner dynamics of Chinese classroom culture (Bogdan, 1982). I expected that their Canadian education in the communicative approach would bear heavily on their current thought regarding appropriate teacher practice. To understand differences and similarities between learning English in immersion as opposed to learning it as a FL in a native or first culture (C1) context, I interviewed two groups of Canadian teachers, those who teach ESL in Canada and those who had taught in China.

Canadian Teachers of Students from Asia

I hoped to find out from CTSAs whether, teaching English in immersion, they shared my frustrations, and how they had learned to meet Asian needs and expectations. I hoped Stan Yew and Lydia would tell me how they had reconciled their 1990's theoretical background and philosophy of language education as a communicative activity with their beliefs about and expectations of Asian students. To what extent do they transfer expectations based on prior experience of education in their home countries to the immersion situation? To what extent do they adapt to the culture of our education system, or adopt roles and relationships with their teacher similar to those of Canadian students?

CTSAs interviewed are employed by institutes that prepare students who are either visiting Canada to improve their communicative abilities, or preparing to transfer to English language Canadian university programs. Although Lydia and Stan Yew's classes occasionally include students from Latin America and the Middle East, the vast majority are here from Korea. Their classes also include students from Vietnam, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China.

Though I had not known the teachers of Asian students before my visits to their classes our shared experiences helped to make us comfortable with each other. Stan Yew's assignment at the institute was primarily intermediate conversational English for adults, but included some reading and writing. Based on his two years' teaching experience and personal interest in cross-cultural studies, he attests to broad similarities of expectation among his Asian students despite their various nationalities. This Canadian-born son of Taiwanese immigrants, aged 30, holds a Masters' of Education degree in adult ESL education. Referring to himself as bi-cultural, I believe he provides relatively deep insight of the contexts from which his students come. I attended his three-hour class, mingling with his students and assisting him in class. We chatted while walking several blocks to a Korean restaurant for lunch and the interview. He was excited about his imminent departure to a one-year teaching contract in Japan.

Lydia, on the other hand, is a female aged 45, who obtained her Masters' Degree in ESL curriculum in 1991, subsequent to an eleven year career in teaching ESL to adults in community based language programs. She has taught at the institute for four years and coordinates program planning and curriculum design, teaching advanced classes in reading and writing. In the particular summer course she was teaching, her students were not Asians, but Latinos, and some comment comparing the two groups were made in the interview. Prior to our interview, I attended her class, a lecture theatre presentation on ESL practice given by a visiting scholar. We met in her usual classroom immediately following.

I hoped information provided by these CTSAs would provide the bridge between knowledge of ChNs about themselves and their education culture, and beliefs of FEs like me. We shared interest in cultures, experience of Canadian education culture, teaching practice and theoretical background in communicative language pedagogy. From the views of CTSAs regarding their role as language teachers and their relationship with students, I hoped to compare and contrast their expectations with those of ChNs, to extend and extrapolate their understandings to the situation of FE teachers in China.

Foreign Experts

Finally, to understand whether my frustrations in China had been a result of personal inadequacies and isolation, or whether they were shared by others who had taught there, I met with teachers who had taught English to young adults at teachers' colleges in China. The hiring of FEs for teacher's colleges in China requires a university degree, preferably in education though it need not be in the English language field (Maley, 1986). For the sake of consistency among interviewees, I would have preferred participants with formal education in ESL methods. However, the individuals I talked to had, like me, voluntarily done some research on current ESL methods in communicative teaching in preparation for teaching in China.

Jasmine was introduced to me by a mutual friend, and the interview preceded a family meal in which we were both included, and a walk together afterward. She had obtained her Masters Degree in adult literacy education in 1990, and her readings in ESL methods aligned with her whole language approach to literacy. In going to China she was in search of a professional challenge, a cultural experience and travel. She taught for one year in a two year upgrading program for junior and senior middle school teachers at a teachers' college in northern China. While most of her students were experienced teachers, some were young adult teachers in training.

Farr was a male university professor in his mid-forties at the time of his 1984-85 assignment in China where he was on a years' study leave. In Canada his subject area focus was in elementary social studies. Coincidentally, Ai Ci had been one of his students. Some of the experiences of which he speaks as teacher, coincide with Ai Ci's who was an undergraduate student at the time. Farr's long term interest in China will have provided him also with many insights and a considerable level of tolerance. It is ironic that although Farr had been a personal acquaintance of some years, it was only with him that I felt somewhat uncomfortable, inferior, as if my abilities at interviewing and doing research were being judged. He had only one hour to give to the interview so it is possible that my lack of comfort was influenced by time constraints.

At the time of interviewing, I was guided by my intention to study curriculum design. Instead, the focus of the research changed to developing understandings of similarities and differences in beliefs and expectations regarding roles and relationships of FE and Chinese students. I found that those understandings are prerequisite to my passion for curriculum design. Therefore, significant portions of what I learned cannot be used here. In the initial stages of data analysis, I focused on interview exchanges which helped make meaning that would transfer to teaching situations in Asia. I felt it was the interviews that would provide the greatest assistance in understanding the kinds of

frustrations to be faced. As the analysis process progressed I found in fact, that information provided by CTSAs regarding their roles as ESL/EFL teachers in a Canadian immersion context had little relevance for the Chinese context. Nonetheless, the practical compromises and adaptations they have made to their theoretical beliefs provided insights of great benefit in drawing implications.

I compiled, selected and analyzed information from these six participant sources with insights from my own experiences as expressed in the narratives in Chapters I and V. Gaps in the experiences, expectations, and beliefs of ChNs, FEs, and CTSAs create spaces across which bridges for understanding can be built. Differences and similarities in views assisted me as I sought to derive implications for Canadian teachers in foreign contexts regarding adaptations to our roles and our relationships with students. I hope my experiences, research and analysis will supplement our ability to enjoy effective teaching experiences in China or other countries where we might be hired to teach English, smoothing the way a little.

Ethics

It is incumbent upon the researcher to be considerate of the needs of others and conduct research in an ethical manner. In meeting the requirements of the University of Alberta, Faculty of Education Ethics review my intention to conduct interviews was submitted to the Department of Education's Ethics Review Committee. As intended, participants were each informed in writing that their identities would be kept confidential and their anonymity guaranteed. To this end, participants' names are fictional and specific references to institutional affiliations are omitted. I ensured that participants were informed of my research interest in:

1. exploring beliefs they held about teacher and student roles and relationships, and
2. teaching strategies they favoured in their practice.

In the course of the initial interview request, participants were informed of the general context of questions I would ask. They were reminded again of the purpose and general nature of the questions at the outset of the interview (Spradley, 1979). One interview of approximately one and a half hours was conducted with each of the six participants between May 18 and July 9, 1996 in naturalistic settings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Assumptions

This study admits to six broad assumptions. Perhaps the overriding assumption is that people in industrializing nations (see Appendix A, Glossary of Terms) have a limited awareness of the differences between us, and many perceive Western societies to be more advanced. I am assuming that in desiring advancement, they seek Westernization. Perceiving in our culture so much that they want, people attempt to adopt our ways willy-nilly, without adequate critique and evaluation of particulars of our differences (Hayhoe, 1987). Ai Ci, one of the ChNs interviewed, made reference to this issue, saying

> we expect that... where there has been lots of Western influence for a long time, [things are] much better. And they really are. Shirts from United States, they are different, the quality is better, and so people like them better. That is true. When people experience one such thing, two such things, three such things, they generalize that everything outside is better. And they want it better too.

Cultural repercussions which may result are not considered. In other words, it appears people try to adopt certain values in isolation, without understanding how those values integrate with existing cultural values, or indeed without considering the implications adoption or integration of foreign values might have on existing values and social expectations.

Furthermore, I have assumed that the purpose of the Chinese government in hiring foreigners to teach English at Chinese teachers' colleges and universities is to promote economic development (McKay, 1992). By exposing their students to native English speakers, students have access not only to the accents but to knowledge of the ways and values of English language cultures and SL teaching methods.

Third, I am also assuming that all teachers are conscientious and dedicated to providing the highest level of language teaching of which they are capable at the time. Gaining English language competence is tremendously important to students and Chinese society as they move to effect economic change. Language plays a vital role as we represent and maintain culture. It is through our linguistic communications with each other that we effect change in our societies. EFL teachers are, therefore, change agents. It is imperative that we be cognizant that many of our values are inherent in our language and how we conduct ourselves. Yet our primary purpose "is not to effect change in [our employer's] social and educational structures" (McKay, 1992) but rather to provide a model of native speaker competence and alternative teaching methods.

Fourth, the incredibly complex processes by which we acquire language are barely understood. Nonetheless, I assume the validity of Krashen and Terrell's theoretical propositions upon which the communicative approach to teaching ESL is based. Krashen's five hypotheses for natural language acquisition (1983) and Swain's (1993) proposition regarding the value of learner output are briefly summarized as follows.

A. The acquisition vs. learning hypothesis states that there are two ways of gaining language competence, "learning" and "acquisition". "Learning" is formal knowledge gained *about* language, its structures and rules. On the other hand, language "acquisition" for real communicative purposes occurs naturally, "in a sub-conscious process" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 26). Knowledge of language formalities is not a prerequisite to acquired language competence.

B. The affective filter hypothesis effects the ability and rate of language acquisition, though not one's aptitude for learning about language. Highly motivated students who are self-confident, have high esteem and low anxiety will acquire the SL more quickly because their attitudes to the SL and cultural group function positively (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). These variables control how much input the learner avails him/herself of, and how much of that is "converted into intake" (Ellis, 1988).

C. The natural order hypothesis states that structures of phonology, morphology and grammar are acquired in a predictable order for sets of language acquirers, i.e. people whose L1 and target L2 are shared. The approximate sequence of acquisition, however, does not correspond exactly to that of first language acquirers (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

D. The monitor hypothesis proposes that explicit formalized learnings about language forms, structures and rules function primarily as monitors of language output. Successful use of the monitor function requires that the language user have enough time to consider the rules, that s/he must attend to those rules, focusing on form, and that s/he knows the rule (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

E. According to the comprehensible input (i) hypothesis we acquire additional language competence by having access to input that is just slightly beyond our current level of competence (i + 1) (Krashen & Terrell, 1983)

F. The output hypothesis suggests three contributions to language acquisition:

1. "that language production provides the opportunity for meaningful practice" (Swain, 1993, p. 159), which in turn facilitates access to spontaneous use.

2. learners may be inductively forced to move beyond semantic processing of input to recognition and application of syntactic rules previously unacknowledged, and

3. language production permits the learner to test personal hypotheses about language, and obtain feedback as input (Swain, 1993).

Fifth, in the choice to use interview data provided by Canadian teachers whose students are primarily Asian, though not necessarily mainland Chinese, I assume that the learning

strategies and preferences, roles and relationships between teachers and students are common among Pacific Rim students. While I recognize there are many particularized differences, teachers interviewed expressed their belief that similarities predominate insofar as language education is concerned.

Sixth, and finally, I assume that my own and the beliefs of interview participants were openly and honestly shared, and that they possessed the requisite English language competency to communicate their understandings to me and that, in fact, transactions of understandings took place. I assume that they participated with the best interests of Chinese English language learners at heart. Because of the complexity of teaching culture to students whose linguistic competence is limited, I assume that the perceptions of teachers of their dissatisfactions and frustrations with their effectiveness in teaching ESL/EFL are accurate and real.

Limitations

In addition to the assumptions I have made which may limit the study's validity, the research itself is limited in a number of ways. As a qualitative study which describes phenomena, accumulation or analysis of empirical or statistical data from isolated particulars is left to others. The experiences that formed the impetus for this study occurred in 1992-93, and interviews not until May-July, 1996. As such research data being collected was *ex post facto* to the events that caused their need (Cohen & Manion, 1980). Phenomena described in the narratives is interpreted by weaving learnings gleaned from the literature with data provided by the six interviewees on the single occasion of our personal meetings which ranged between 60 and 90 minutes. I did obtain a gender balance among Canadian teachers, but both Chinese teachers are male. The vast range in age (30 to 55 years) and experience of teaching Asian students (one to 15 years) also influence participant insights.

All interviews were conducted with teachers in Canada. Neither ChNs nor FEs were actively engaged in teaching Chinese students at the time of interviewing. Information provided by them is based on memories, which although not always accurate are nonetheless the basis upon which we all conduct our lives and future actions (Clandinin, 1991). Despite the very dynamic political and educational situation in China, I was unable to interview either people who are currently students in China, nor currently teaching in China, because it was not possible for me to be there. On the other hand, it is quite possible that ChNs were in fact more open with me here in Canada than they might have been in China. In Canada the information they gave was completely

anonymous. They were not presenting the views of anyone but themselves, and they were accountable to no one for their opinions.

Even as the interviews progressed our cultural and discourse style differences made it apparent that the texts constructed from interviews would not be transparent. "They are constructions which inherently distort due to the shift " (Lather, 1991, p. 94) from one language to another, or one language form (verbal) to another (written). All interviews were conducted in English, the SL of both Chinese participants. While ChNs had very considerable English language competency, this consideration is valid since it may not have been possible for them to completely express their ideas, thoughts and feelings in English. They were attempting to reconstruct their experiences in a SL, which were then again symbolically transposed in transcription.

The two CTSAs have only taught here in Canada. They were the only participants actively teaching in the culture about which they were being interviewed (Spradley, 1979). Although the majority of their students are from Asian countries, including Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Viet Nam and Japan, the minority are in fact from the Chinese mainland. While Confucianist and/or Buddhist philosophies are fundamental to the cultures of East Asian countries, national variations, specifically to education culture, have not been accounted for.

The Canadians who taught English in China were there for only one year. However, this short term contract is very typical and thus reflective of the context of the majority of expatriates (McMahon, 1995). Their understandings of Chinese culture, fundamentally different from our own, can be superficial at best. As a result I felt the benefit to be gained by delving into participant understandings about reasons for their frustrations or acceptances of roles they maintained, relationships developed, successes or failures of teaching strategies would be of limited value. Instead, I relied on the literature for such explanations. Further detail regarding individual interviewees is provided in the next section, "Participants".

The context of the interviews might best be viewed as attempts to gain mutual understanding in an investigative dialogic encounter for the self-critical construction of grounded theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lather, 1991). "To invoke the reflexivity needed to protect research from the researcher's own enthusiasms" (Lather, 1991), I sought to find a balance in the question/answer discourse so that a sense of mutuality was obtained. While I occasionally needed clarification or expansion of responses, I also needed to prevent my own enthusiasms or biases from unduly occupying the floor with excessive self-disclosure. While I was quite prepared to look a "fool for the sake of science" (Wolcott, 1990), it would obviously have been insincere to never contradict,

never express disbelief, never relate a personal incident. Such a distanced attitude would not have contributed to interactive research reciprocity (Lather, 1991).

Questions were not worded in any particular sequence nor did I make any attempt to use especially consistent vocabulary. On occasion participants asked questions of me, which provided opportunity for brief personal disclosures. Thus some of the "asymmetry of power" (Mishler, 1986, p. 116) characteristic of positivist interview procedures was dismantled. All questions were not questions in a grammatical sense. "A question may more usefully be thought of as part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in the discourse between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what they are saying to each other" (Mishler, 1986, p. 54). Participants were given considerable latitude in the breadth and depth they wished to provide in their responses, largely determining the appropriacy and relevance of responses based on mutual agreement as to successful negotiation of meaning (Clandinin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Mishler, 1986). The research "intentionality define[d] the starting and stopping points (Clandinin, 1994, p. 416). Thus, the focus of the questions was consistent, but their formulation and re-formulation during the interview process was not.

Information provided in the interviews is based on personal memories of personal experiences. As such, they reflect the biases, cultural values and personalities of the participants. Each of three pairs of participants presented their views from different perspectives, as ChNs, as Canadian teachers of ESL to Asians, and as former FE teachers. Whether due to my way of interviewing, individual personalities of participants, preconceptions about what was expected of them as interviewees, or other factors, the focus of information provided was varied. Chinese participants told me many things about their society and the culture of education in analytical ways. The context of interviews with Stan Yew and Lydia, the CTSAs, was quite different. Stan Yew was able to integrate inter-cultural analysis with descriptions of his own teaching style, while Lydia emphasized program and curriculum design. FEs told several stories, with Farr's attitude being more accepting of Chinese ways and Jasmine focusing on frustrations she experienced.

Transferability and Credibility

Since the study adopts elements of several research paradigms in a cultural perspective, but adheres to none, establishing its trustworthiness as an accurate and valid representation of data as rigourous research are issues to be dealt with. I am satisfied that this qualitative research possesses the required rigour because it has been "carried

out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of human and cultural social context (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 488). Despite the study's assumptions and limitations, I have attempted to present a rigourous report that is fair, balanced and truthful, complete, sensitive and loyal to all participants loyal (Wolcott, 1990). I believe it is credible as truth and is transferable in its application to other contexts. Given the complexity of exploring teacher and student roles and relationships, the research design strategy facilitates continual reassessment of multiple levels of inquiry (Clandinin, 1991).

A consensus of norms for writing narrative research has not yet been established. We do know that "it is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Terms common to those research methods such as validity, reliability and generalizability carry connotations which create confusion in the context of narrative. Instead, other factors contribute to the trustworthiness of a descriptive account in addition to and inherent in the researcher's writing style. The description of reality must possess a predictable external transferability to environments outside the one researched. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). It must be verifiable, i.e. it must possess a utility in practice that enables the reader practitioner to learn directly or indirectly from its insights so that its implications can be applied to others contexts and situations (Maxwell, 1992; Schön, 1991). This study attempts to accomplish transferability by drawing implications for the role of FEs and the relationships they expect to have with students to cultural contexts other than China.

Judgments around the trustworthiness of a report to credibly represent what it claims to depend on its interpretive qualities (Wolcott, 1990). As researcher, I have tried to write accurately, to vividly represent experience in words that engage the reader and make meaning in a way that resonates with reader experience (Maxwell, 1992; Wolcott, 1990). Efforts were made to obtain data from pluralistic realities accurately obtained in an emic perspective through participants' frames of reference and a process of recycling understandings in the course of interviews (Lincoln, 1990; Maxwell, 1992). Interpretive accounts are grounded in meanings communicated through intentions, cognitions, affects, beliefs and evaluations of participants. The researcher was cognizant in the process of interviewing that participants' awareness of their feelings, accuracy of recall, and distortion or concealment of views were factors to be considered (Maxwell, 1992). Quotations from interview texts, therefore, provide the reader with access to participants' perspectives.

Narrative inquiry is by its very nature, subjective. As a human researcher, I cannot be *objective.* I can though, and do, endeavour to acknowledge my biases and prejudices in the interpretive process. As humans we are continually living our experiences in context

and telling them, and in the telling living them again. At the same time we are reliving those of the past as we grow from the past toward an imagined future. The same experience, told, analyzed, critiqued by another would be a different story from a different point of view. There are always different versions of different stories even from the same site, given the teller's way of knowing reality, personal biases resulting from experiences, perspective and abilities, interpretive criteria used as well as the logic of the text (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Lather, 1991; Schön, 1991). This logic can be questioned on the basis of the interaction of elements of the data, the lived experiences of interviewees in action with their representation in text, intended meanings of interview participants, the text with the author/voice, and finally, the reader with the text (Denzin, 1994). Each of the six participants interviewed possesses a unique individual personality occupying particular cultural, geographic and temporal positions which interacted with mine (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Wolcott, 1990).

Chapter III Role of the Chinese Student

Introduction

In this chapter, the role typically played by the Chinese student of EFL is explored. Reading the literature, interviewing the six teachers and reliving and telling my stories in narrative brought many insights. I could see that socio-cultural and existential impacts on situations that transpired through teaching "The Chinese way: A novel context for teaching authentic literature" (Chapter I) would be vital to understanding. In the narrative inquiry process I found the input of interviewees, Zhi Hui and Ai Ci, ChNs, particularly helpful. They were able to provide, in their own words, face to face supplementary information about their educational history and expectations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Clandinin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Lather, 1991; Mishler, 1986). They helped me understand the context of difficulties and challenges I faced in attempting to teach a novel study. Farr and Jasmine, former FE teachers, also significantly extended my understanding through insights they gained while teaching in China in 1984-85 and 1994-95, respectively. They helped me resolve feelings of isolation since their frustrations were often similar to mine. Though I have not quoted from transcripts of Lydia or Stan Yew, CTSAs, information they provided about their students from Asia supported many points made by Zhi Hui and Ai Ci.

Data provided in semi-structured interviews guided by framework questions was rich. As interviews were transcribed several themes emerged which lead me to an inquiry into the emotional, esthetic and moral responses that teaching experience elicited for me and interview data as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (1994). I begin by exploring the student's role as impacted by three factors, their socio-cultural history, existential reality and their internalized experience of teacher education as I look back on situations which occurred in "The Chinese way" (Clandinin, 1994).

The bearing of students' socio-cultural history on the role they played and the ways in which they related with me is vital. The impacts of Confucian tradition on education structures, theory and what is perceived to constitute knowledge, learning and literacy follows. Cultural norms dictating parameters and constraints of professional and classroom communication patterns influence what gets done, by whom, when, if and

how. Therefore, the effects of hierarchy in the workplace, maintained by power as knowledge, *guanxi* (contacts) among members of groups and "keeping face" (self-esteem) as they function in interpersonal relationships is examined. The lasting effects of the Cultural Revolution as a significant incident in China's contemporary history also bears scrutiny.

Secondly, under existential reality I try to understand the impact of China's educational policy and economic conditions on student experience of teacher education. Therefore, I examine what pre-service teacher education is in China by looking at its place in the post-secondary education hierarchy. The issues of access to education support resources and curriculum design further vitally effect students' learning environment.

Socio-cultural context and current trends interact to impact the ways in which students internalize their experience of foreign language education. I explore the internal experience of teacher education through the goals of student teachers and the ways they learn. Reflections interspersed throughout reflect my perceptions and insights to situations that made up "The Chinese way". Finally, I take a temporal perspective, and look at what was, for me, the essence of the success of adapting previous practice in "The Chinese way" to develop understandings of impacts incurred and that would have been predictable given what I have learned.

Impacts of Socio-Cultural History

Our socio-cultural history, which has come to us from past generations, may be defined as the values and attitudes we experience as reality. They enable or constrain our functioning in cultural and social contexts. Their source may no longer be recognizable or communicable, yet they are the basis of how we think about what we 'know to be natural and universally true' (Byram et al., 1994; Clandinin, 1994) (Oxford, 1994). They are our internal individualized "way of knowing" (Eisner, 1988).

Chinese people are fiercely and justly proud of their country's long literary history. Scholars from the time of Confucius, 500 years before Christ, to the present, are revered. In China's patriarchal, primogenitary society, Confucius' influence on education remains and is the first sub-topic discussed. Chinese values regarding concepts of knowledge, learning and literacy follow. *Guanxi* and face, guiding principles for interpersonal behaviour, are specifically addressed. Holding power of place in a hierarchy, people strive to maintain self-esteem by fulfilling their duty to those groups of which they are members. But public awareness of failure results in loss of face, and possibly power. Either is a significant personal event. The Cultural Revolution is an

especially noteworthy example of the impact of socio-cultural history on existential reality and is an ongoing reminder to citizens to conduct themselves circumspectly. Its effect as an extant memory for many of political power brought to bear on individual intellectuals is down-played by patriotic Chinese. It is an unfortunate incident in China's history which resulted in international loss of face.

Each of these factors of socio-cultural history impact interpersonal interactions and experience. Each influenced my teaching experience.

Confucian Influence on Education

Preparation and planning for the teaching of a novel study as described in "The Chinese way" brought to bear many aspects of Chinese culture which might otherwise not have touched me. In a very superficial way I was aware that mainland China is Confucianist in its belief system, and that one communicates needs indirectly and holistically. But I had no real conception of what that meant in terms of differences between us in daily functioning, how it influenced my students' lives and would influence my professional life. Over time, the nature of China's education culture, as one strongly influenced by Confucian social hierarchies and knowledge structures, exhibiting a strongly classified and framed curricular organization, became abundantly clear (Hayhoe, 1989). The factors which constitute expectations about classroom culture, the role of student and teacher, learning and language learning, and appropriate teaching strategies are founded in Confucian teachings (Penner, 1995).

As is the case throughout the world, in China too the "education system reflects the culture of the country as well as being a primary agent of cultural transmission" (Hauser, Fawson, & Latham, 1990, p. 45). The purpose of education is two-fold, to maintain political order while seeking economic modernization. Since 1905 there has been an ebb and flow between the government's desire to exert more control or seek more foreign input in China's 20th century search for modernization. Foreigners bring with them their political and practical ideas, and as they communicate with Chinese people, philosophic and political debate and critique are inevitable. Therefore, the government is repeatedly faced with the conundrum of being able to exert control while simultaneously encouraging creativity in the sciences (Hayhoe, 1989).

Educational theory feeds "directly into teaching practice and curriculum development" (Sampson, 1984, p. 24), guiding teaching actions that strive to produce a person who conforms to the society's norms. The predominant traditional approach to ideas about what constitutes education, knowledge and learning continue to shape students' college

learning experiences. Since ancient times social harmony has been maintained in China by teachers who imbue in students unquestioning respect for their superiors (themselves) and the classic texts which guide personal and social behavior. Zhi Hui made the following comments in this regard.

> Teachers are generally much older than the students and therefore... deserve respect, and as such students would not contradict teachers... . One of the basic principles of Confucianism is respect for seniors, respect your elders and those who have knowledge, according to the characteristics of Confucius himself... a person of great learning and knowledge, that's why people respect the theory. If you ask Chinese people about these values, they will say that people are to respect their superiors, elders, students their teachers, wives respect husbands. With this hierarchical system it is easy to rule a whole country.
>
> Students are to just accept what teacher says; that's how students learn.

As Zhi Hui said, although few would claim to adhere to a Confucian ethico-political doctrine, it continues to influence education, teachers and teaching. Confucian moral integrity dictates that people restrain their egos and observe the rituals of the supreme order in the interests of achieving social harmony, order, good government and eternal peace strategies. Often only a subtle hint is necessary to control students whose desire it is to be dutiful in adhering to their lowly place in a very tightly structured hierarchy.

Knowledge, Learning and Literacy

Historically, education was the means by which one could gain social and economic mobility. Passing the civil service examinations by being able to quote the knowledge of Confucius and the masters who interpreted him was essential in gaining that mobility (Liu, 1988). A view of the teacher and text as models to be imitated maintains a significant role in Chinese education, as

> the textbook is the main guideline, and the teacher may add enrichment from the other reference books... .The teacher refers mainly to the textbook. He will read everything in the teacher's reference book (teacher guide) although the student has only the textbook. The student will master the textbook and he will also learn from what the teacher has learned in other reference books. That's part of the supplementary student learnings; it is not considered very, very important. What is in the textbook is considered most important (Ai Ci).

The concept of knowledge as an accumulation of facts gained by successfully committing the words of the masters to memory persists (Li, 1984; Maley, 1986; Penner, 1995; Trimmer & Warnock, 1992). Ai Ci noted,

> my role was mainly to receive knowledge. The teacher imparts knowledge, and the student receives that knowledge. Then you memorize it, and try to utilize it in your practice. As an English major learning seemed a matter of memorizing what the teacher said, and trying to follow the National College Examination Guidelines. We tried to memorize and master everything the teacher said, and tried to learn everything in the textbook. That's basically what we consider learning.

H.H. Stern (1983), speaking of the Western concept of learning, expresses thoughts very much in agreement with the Chinese view as expressed also by Sampson (1990) Ai Ci and Zhi Hui. Stern said that

> 'learning' is determined to have taken place when an individual changes in some way... . It includes not only the learning of skills ... or the acquisition of knowledge. It refers also to learning to learn and learning to think; the modification of attitudes; the acquisition of interests, social values, or social roles; and even changes in personality (1983, p. 18].

However, in this same paragraph he addresses also what may be a basic contradiction in current educational theory for Chinese versus Western teachers. "Most learning, and probably the most effective learning, takes place in a natural way, that is to say, without a conscious effort, in response to one's environment and culture. The psychological concept of learning goes far beyond learning directly from a teacher or learning through study or practice" (Stern, 1983, p. 18). By contrast, in China's teacher-centred curricula, memorization and repetition to accumulate knowledge play a very significant role in learning, with students making very conscious efforts in endless hours of intensive independent study. Researchers discredit the very significant contribution students' dedicated memorization of long text passages may play in knowledge transfer and application (Sampson, 1984; Ting, 1987). The intended purpose of committing text to memory is that the wisdom of the masters will be internalized, and thus made available for future contextualized use.

The purpose of learning is self improvement and self change through literacy which enables contemplation of and guidance according to the advice and insights from the masters. The purpose of literature, then, regardless of genre, is to teach life lessons by leading and reinforcing good behavior, enabling one to become a better person, better able to cope effectively with life's problems (Sampson, 1990). Transfer of Confucianist attention to rules dominates SL learning such that an in-depth knowledge of the systems

of rules that govern the language and effective accumulation of facts about those systematic rules is deemed language learning (Penner, 1995).

Subject area content, that is, knowledge *about* the SL is the focus of SL teaching. Literacy thus gained is assumed to provide access to the truths and wisdom contained in SL texts. Although the student may not be able to apply facts accumulated immediately, they are available in memory when a situation arises to which they do apply (Field, 1984; Liu, 1988).

Contrary to the Western view, literature is not regarded as a matter open to interpretation, dispute or discussion by inexperts such as students (Rosenblatt, 1978; Spack, 1990; Trimmer & Warnock, 1992), who, as learners of everything have virtually no status (Fox, 1994). Chinese hold literature in reverential esteem, viewing it as the "embodiment of knowledge, wisdom and truth" (Maley, 1986, p. 103) available for extraction and transplantation into the student's mind (Maley, 1986) (Penner, 1995; Ting, 1987) and attribute great importance to its mastery. The concept of alternative meanings obtainable from text is confusing for Chinese students since, for them, the site of learning is between literary masters who have interpreted texts and contemporary teachers, who in turn, cite those classic interpretations? For them the interaction is not a direct one between reader and text, but is mediated by literary masters and teachers (Thomson, 1992). Students constantly defer to master interpreters, among whom are their teachers, and the word of their teachers is of paramount importance (Trimmer & Warnock, 1992). Thus, they do not subscribe to the notion that what is crucial to understanding a text is not what an author puts in, but what the reader can get out of it, how reading can help one better understand *one's own world, today* (Trimmer & Warnock, 1992) and that despite their lack of expertise, their interpretations are valid. Chinese understand text meanings as fixed in the trajectory through time and history.

Chinese students demonstrate a greater desire for 'personal literary education' than preparation for teaching, in Farr's opinion. Ai Ci said that this literary education consists of memorizing facts of literary history, perhaps some literary criticism (Field, 1984) so that they can appear knowledgeable in conversation, being able to recite "who wrote what when and whether it is any good or not" (Maley, 1986, p. 103). Farr agreed that students prefer a systematic reading of well known English, Canadian, and American authors and, as Ai Ci said, are less likely to be interested in studying literary works by less famous authors. Like Farr, I felt that despite that they are studying to become teachers of children they do not like to study children's literature, viewing it as insufficiently deep, intellectually challenging or stimulating. They have and wish to continue their study of the classics.

Teaching intentions of experimental innovations in English literature directly contradicted student expectations. Even in the first term while I adhered overall to a traditional approach to the canon, I also injected methods they were unaccustomed to since my understandings of the constituency of knowledge, learning and literacy were at variance with theirs (Maley, 1986). I endeavoured to encourage them to take creative and critical risks in developing their own thoughtful initiatives. While this method is in keeping with current state educational policy it opposes common educational practice.

I now understand that many students would have interpreted my constant questioning as a lack of planning or a lack of knowledge, representative of laziness, incompetence or both (Brick, 1991). My desire was, rather, to teach as I had been taught by my high school English teacher (Krashen, 1984; Lortie, 1975). Instead, they saw attempts to manage open discussion as a lack of classroom management and discipline (Ma, 1992). Without professing to know "the meaning" of the texts together with accepted interpretations, they saw little cause to respect me or my teaching ability, believing I had little knowledge to transmit to them (Ting, 1987). In my view the purpose of teaching literature was to increase awareness of Western cultures (Spack, 1990). Because our cultures value questioning, creative expression, original thought, I could not teach the way my Chinese students expected me to (Ting, 1987). I had to manipulate the teaching learning context in such a way that students accepted this alternative method of curriculum delivery.

Hierarchy and the Workplace

In preparing the unit I was confronted by various levels of the educational hierarchy. While Chinese people, according to Confucian tradition, accept an hierarchical system of authority which attaches a high priority to obeying social rules in the interests of maintaining order, Westerners are less accustomed to such strict rules of conduct (Liu, 1988; Penner, 1995; Sampson, 1990; Ting, 1987). There, people unquestioningly accept the authority of superiors, seeking always to adhere to group norms, exploiting interpersonal contacts to transcend constraints of their group (Brick, 1991). The concepts of power, *guanxi*, group identity and loss of face play pivotal roles in inter-personal relationships, maintaining and obviating hierarchies.

I chose to teach a novel study using accepted texts, not just because of past teaching successes, but because I believed it was consistent with the literature canon and students' expectations. In the course of my initial introductory interview with administrators I received the express perception that the English literary classics of the (Jia, 1992 printing, copyright date n/a) anthology were viewed as sufficiently accurate in

their portrayal of an homogenous English culture unchanged across time. But teaching strategies I had been using gave students little opportunity to exercise any autonomy to exploit their own learning styles and strategies. Even in the month of March of a term concluding July 10, I hoped they could still benefit from my teaching as I turned to a teaching style with which I was more comfortable.

Power

As was alluded to by Zhi Hui, knowledge is power. Administrators, from clerks to high government officials, have some degree of power, whether petty or mighty, and exert it to constrain, restrict or facilitate the conduct of business (Brick, 1991). The power of the librarian at Branch Campus rested in his knowledge of the collection itself, and the logistics of accessing it. In order to maintain his personal power over the library collection, and thus me, he retained his sense of power by keeping that knowledge to himself. Perhaps he had no desire to assist me in accessing the very dusty, virtually unused collection. However, when his cooperation with me was directed by Director Feng, he was duty-bound to be helpful. Similarly, the classroom monitors provided the help which was their duty to me, when directed to do so via appropriate channels of authority. In doing so, they gained power and kept face before their classmates.

Bound by duty to respect their teachers, students exhibit an attitude of obedience and subservience often volunteering to assist the teacher with menial chores (Ford, 1988). Zhi Hui said that students would never directly criticize or contradict a teacher in class, and only indirectly out of class if a special bond of mutual respect existed.

> Outside class, I had a reputation as a top student, I could ask the teacher questions although I would not ask in class. I would not contradict him directly, or appear critical in class, but could ask questions in other ways that would help you get something correct. Being a top student was very helpful.

Not only would such behavior show disrespect, but in the event the criticism was accurate, the teacher would be personally and/or publicly embarrassed, thus losing face (Ting, 1987).

Guanxi

When the need to transcend the bounds of one group extend into those of another group, one exploits one's contacts. This liaison, *guanxi*, is the relationship built between extended family members, friends and co-workers (Brick, 1991). It extends to all facets of life and enables one to "get things done". One's contacts smooth the way, breaking

through social barriers on one's behalf. The level of one's success or failure in seeking the assistance of others depends in turn, on the loyalties of that other person to his/her groups. In attending to the need of students to maintain their group identities, effective implementation of innovative teaching goals such as those described in the foregoing narrative depended upon my establishing positive relationships and liaison with members of the larger group, academic leaders who were either administrators, teaching colleagues or student monitors. I did not understand that my status as a teacher and foreigner, recruited at great cost, was not sufficient to warrant the cooperation of educational 'support' staff as I tried to achieve what I perceived to be legitimate educational goals.

Group Identity and Face

In sharp contrast to the motivation of Westerners to maximally realize individual goals, Chinese personal identity is grounded in Confucian philosophy. One's identity exists in and through membership in social groups. The concept of duty fulfillment is integral to obtaining self-fulfillment by meeting "social responsibilities to the greatest extent possible" (Brick, 1991). A student, for example, strives to fulfill him/herself in his/her groups by being dutiful to family, classmates, community, college, province and country. Pursuit of individual interests that oppose or exceed those of the group are viewed as selfish and irresponsible since maintenance of harmonious social relations is seen as an absolute necessity. Therefore, an individual student would never voice personal objections, nor purposely draw attention to him/herself without group permission.

This concept of face, and the loss or saving of it, play a significant role in Chinese social interactions, serving to keep or reinstate people in their social place according to the hierarchy. Loss of face may be caused by an inadvertent error that contravenes social expectations, or intentionally, as when a superior causes one to be humiliated. Zhi Hui noted

> I once responded [to a question] with one sentence, and the teacher commented that I had made four grammatical errors in one sentence, and she laughed at me. That ridicule did not bother me because I knew my status in the class. I know I made and continue to make many small errors, but I considered that if I could not laugh that off, then how intimidated my classmates would have been to speak out. It did not hurt my confidence, but such ridicule would be very damaging for my classmates.

"Face" plays a part in the characteristic reserve of students who prefer to remain silent, abstaining from participation in discussion or volunteering to respond to questions (Liu, 1988). Zhi Hui said that because students generally feel they lack sufficient linguistic

competence to respond as they ought, elaborately, articulately, correctly and with confidence, they prefer to remain silent, or if called upon to respond, will not. However, the importance of face in maintaining self-respect is acknowledged by group members and superiors. Lack of response communicates a different meaning to Chinese teachers than it did to me. I interpreted it as indifference, resistance or personal rejection instead of simply lack of a correct or linguistically competent response.

Young people are sheltered by parents and teachers alike from loss of face by being protected from experimentation, risk-taking and making errors (Li, 1984). I come from a culture where these risks are encouraged, where the making of errors is regarded as part of the learning experience. I could not understand why students were unwilling to contribute part of a complete answer and cooperatively rely on other members of the group to contribute in the cumulative formulation of a whole (Swain & Miccoli, 1994).

The threat of loss of face may also have been a factor in my inability to access the FL student library collection at Branch Campus. Without first having had the explicit sanction of administrators in the Faculty of Foreign Languages or departmental directors communicated to the librarian, perhaps he perceived himself vulnerable to reprimand if he cooperated with me in permitting me to access the collection. In that case he would lose face before his superiors. Having no English language himself, perhaps he could see no way of tactfully suggesting that this was necessary without involving others, which would nonetheless leave him at risk. At any rate, he was certainly of an age to have seen first-hand the Cultural Revolution's way of dealing with those who willfully transgressed.

One's power within an hierarchical structure is maintained through group solidarity and conformity. *Guanxi* and face are communication patterns which serve to maintain that power and constrain groups. Norms of group solidarity and face were evidenced in the literature class by students' lack of response so long as they worked individually, and so long as I sought responses from students who had not volunteered. I received little response to questions seeking personal literary interpretation or critique. So long as students perceived that I lacked acceptance in the larger group of teachers, their security in their group was assured by a lack of response or passive resistance. When the class as a whole saw that my teaching plan had received the positive sanction and cooperation of administrators, their level of cooperation and motivation in attaining learning goals of the unit changed. They perceived that I was a member of the more powerful group of teachers. Further, as members of a work group they had chosen, their duty to that group's goals took precedence. From the point in the unit when students began to work in small groups, most groups were motivated to attain learning and study

goals set. Individuals who, as members of the large class group had been unmotivated to respond or perform, fell in line

Psychological Baggage of the Cultural Revolution

Effects of the Cultural Revolution, which ended in 1976, still influence student conduct. The intentions of the Cultural Revolution were to transform traditional systems of knowledge structures and organization, uniting theory with practice, and breaking down hierarchy. Common Chinese people felt such faith in Mao Tse Tung, since he was one of them, that many intellectuals responded to his calls for criticism. Disastrously, "that call opened the door for anarchy accompanied by an unprecedented vendetta in which intellectuals were among those that suffered most" (Hayhoe, 1989, p. 27). Their persecution, levied on the grounds that their criticism resulted from their status as elitists, capitalists or spies (Jung, 1991), as they responded to Mao's solicitations for open critique was widespread. The fear engendered by that persecution is evident still. Farr, a FE, told of a young female student who was so embarrassed at having to renege on an invitation to a meal extended to him with her family that she did not face him for more than a month. When she finally spoke to him,

> she said, "Well, you have to understand that during the Cultural Revolution my parents were university professors at the Faculty of Medicine. They had been friends with an American professor there and had been struggled.... [That] means that they had been taken into a public meeting of the Party officials and the professors in the Faculty and had been interrogated about their affiliation with these foreign teachers. Therefore, that must mean that they were encouraging spying in China by foreigners.
>
> Her father had to stand out in the public street on top of a stool with a dunce cap on his head, and with a heavy board hung by a wire around his neck. Imagine that. And on this board was his written confession of all the terrible things that he had done. Her mother had to write out her confession, and then swallow the ink [block].... The ink left a black stain around her lips. She was not allowed to wash that off. It had to stay there until it wore off. That was one of the marks of people in trouble with the political wing of the Party.
>
> [The girl] admitted that this had not happened since the Cultural Revolution. "My parents are old, and they are afraid that these good times will end some day. And this will all come back to haunt them. [They are afraid that] if they have another foreigner in the house, they will have to go through all this again." There were problems that which constrained a furtherance of close relationships with students....

> They had seen the established beliefs overturned. They had seen Mao Tse Tung do everything he could to convince people that there was evil in the Party ... and in their own communities that had to be weeded out ... and replaced. They had seen that when Deng Xiao Ping came into power that there was a sort of reversal, and so it just depends on who is in power on a particular day.

Many students continue to live vicarious memories of the Cultural Revolution's persecution perpetrated on their ancestors. That stigma of fear constrains their ability to interact with foreigners in an uninhibited way. In class, I found, as Farr had, that students refused to discuss issues of content, or even comprehension, of any material that had political overtones that could be conceived to run counter to Chinese socialist policy. Farr noted that students were much more willing to discuss the movie *The Red Shoes*, a folktale about a ballet dancer, than political allegory in *Animal Farm*. They were not willing to answer even comprehension questions in the latter case. Non-traditional teaching strategies as ways of the foreigner continue to be suspect despite China's 'open doors'. It is noteworthy that, while students did develop some confidence in class to question and interpret information presented by me or in readings, few of their original insights found their way into written submissions. I attributed this to Cultural Revolution "psychological baggage".

In the end, the outcome of the so-called Cultural "Revolution" was the reinforcement of those very values it had set out to transform (Hayhoe, 1989). Initiatives to encourage people to spy on each other and betray solid personal relationships remain. In 1985, Farr found peer spying used by administrators to maintain the *status quo* and authority. The Dean had called two of Farr's students (who were from very poor families) into his office and said, "I want you to go over to the factory where this man works and find out... . Come back and give me a full report." They were rewarded with party membership, a great honour for a young person. The person they had spied on was one of their classmates, a good friend. When Farr was able to compare the luxurious, even ostentatious, living conditions of a party member with those of the parents of one of the boys, the boy "didn't have to explain why he had done the errand for the Dean, or how much it meant to him to be able to become a member of the Party."

Persecution of students and intellectuals continues to affect behaviour and personal expression of thought in China. Students have not forgotten that as late as 1982 (Trimmer & Warnock, 1992), and again in the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, they have lost their lives for expressing personal ideas, or ideas in conflict with Chinese policy. They know that Fang Lizhi, a renowned astrophysicist, defender of human rights and political activist, made the mistake of publicly claiming that "knowledge should be independent of power" (Chow, 1993, p. 88). He was stripped of his Party affiliation and

academic status as a result of his critical intellectual crusade against established power and knowledge structures. It is not known for sure if he is still alive in the labour camps. I was also made aware by students, my foreign colleague and others, that part of the duty of the student Communist Party Class Secretary, as well as our "maid", was to inform administrators about our conduct.

Insights Gained

In the context of the literature course, more than in any other I taught in China, I felt rifts. I found that my students' preconceptions of what learning from me, a Foreign "Expert", would be like sometimes "lead to learner confusion and resentment" (Richards, 1986, p. 77). Confucianism's values for hierarchical structure, authority and the continuing fears instilled during the Cultural Revolution made classroom management and discipline non-issues. They also severely limited the likelihood of higher order creative learning or critical thinking taking place (Bacchus, 1997). Even in Canada, Lydia noted she often needed to explicitly encourage active verbal student participation in group activities (Ma, 1992; Swain & Miccoli, 1994). Our greater concern was always for eliciting "English noise", encouraging questions and "speaking out" with critical observations and interpretations. I had "very different expectations from [my] students about what should occur in a classroom community" (McKay, 1992, p. 47) based on prior experience and beliefs. Bridging this gap represented the largest part of my teaching challenge. I came very close to aborting the novel study unit more than once. I was nearly outdone with the effort required to cope with just the logistical considerations and student resistance.

Through the literature study, and teaching the research process I provided awareness of some Western values. My consistently encouraging, non-judgmental reactions to students helped them discard their fears of losing face by asking questions in my classroom, and to take the risk of doing so. They would not suffer humiliation, recrimination or persecution for demonstrating a desire to learn. I felt that unless they could learn to think creatively, try to be critical and take personal initiative, some elements of China's search for modernization would remain beyond reach (Ting, 1987). Students may choose, with discretion, to occasionally resist the ingrained adherence to authority and established rules.

From the point of its conception, I felt it would be counter-productive to seek the cooperation of either students or administrators. Students would tell me "it is not possible" (Maley, 1986), and administrators would fail, as they had previously, to help me. My students were aware of my plan to teach a novel study whereby each individual would have an entire book in their individual possession to read and study. I did not

wish to incur the expense of purchasing all of the books necessary, nor was I willing to admit failure before them by being unable to accomplish my goal. In accordance with my Western way, I believed it preferable to apologize later if the unit was unsuccessful than to not try at all. In my way of knowing, 'to try and fail is better than not to try at all'. But to students, my failure would have resulted in loss of face, having made a promise I did not keep.

I did not realize that by January of the term, student monitors had done their duty in observing me, reporting my espoused beliefs and teaching practices to their superiors, and that I had been accepted. When in desperation I accidentally acceded to the Chinese norm of establishing administrative sanction for new teaching strategies by explaining to Director Feng why I needed to access the Foreign Language Student Library, the assistance I needed was there for me. Despite our *guanxi* it was certainly within his power to either deny me access to the collection, or tactfully tell me that what I wanted would not be there. However, he helped me, even to the extent of reprimanding a worker, because he and those superior to him approved what I was trying to do. It was only late in this research process that I realized that the Dean's promised evaluation of my teaching had been carried out although he had never visited my classroom!

Existential Reality in Pre-Service Teacher Education

"Soviet inspired knowledge patterns [had] combined with residues of the Confucian knowledge tradition to create a sharply hierarchical restructuring of knowledge and a curricular organization marked by strong classification and framing" (Hayhoe, 1989, p. 21). The intention of the Cultural Revolution was to reduce the hierarchy and authoritarianism in institutions of higher learning and to oppose the dogmatism and empiricism of intellectuals. However, Mao failed to address the problem of higher order social changes that could accomplish such fundamental educational transformations. Government rhetoric stating that "education has a 'strategic role' in China's modernization process" (Paine, 1990, p. 134) adds political, symbolic and real urgency to the need for well-educated teachers.

The nullification implied in the foregoing statements is, however, that education *does not* have an *essential or vital* role to play in that process. Since 1978 when China's doors re-opened, foreigners continue to find an educational policy strongly influenced by Confucian thinking and Soviet/European knowledge structures and patterns (Hayhoe, 1989; Liu, 1988; Penner, 1995; Ting, 1987). In this section I examine how those external existential impacts of current policy and economy in education contribute to student teachers' experience of their tertiary education (Clandinin, 1994). The

hierarchical structure of institutes of higher learning impacts funding in teacher education and thus educational resources such as school buildings, texts and teachers cannot be taken for granted. Curriculum design in teacher education remains authoritarian within a Confucian framework highly attentive to examination achievement, thus inhibiting teacher innovation.

Hierarchy in Post-Secondary Education

The Confucian attention to knowledge hierarchies is reflected by post-secondary institutions whose prestige results from the perception of the mental labour expected to be expended by graduates in their careers. Institutes of higher learning are classified by the subject discipline taught, with political education and law carrying the highest distinction. Typical of the disciplinary isolation in higher education, teacher education is conducted at institutes which train exclusively either secondary, junior high or elementary teachers, maintaining a narrow, professional focus and specialized curriculum. Institutes of higher learning are further classified according to the level of theoretical vs. practical emphasis offered. In decreasing order of prestige, post-secondary institutes are comprised of universities, normal universities, normal schools, colleges and technical or vocational institutes. Their national, provincial or only municipal affiliation further sub-divides the hierarchy (Hayhoe, 1989; Paine, 1990). All these factors combine to determine institutional status, and thus, funding priority. Although some teacher education takes place in universities, it continues to be offered primarily in normal universities and normal schools which have less status in the higher education community.

Whereas I was initially confused by my duel teaching assignment, I soon understood the off-hand attitude of my administration toward students at Branch Campus, a normal school. Their two-year diploma would gave them potential only as urban elementary teachers or rural lower middle school teachers. By contrast the graduates at Main Campus, a normal university, would have the higher standing of becoming urban teachers, likely at the upper middle school level. I was unaccustomed to such a *marked* distinction.

Support Resources

Lack of access to support services restricts innovation. Throughout my year in China no orientation to support facilities either in the community (such as other colleges) or on campus (such as photo-copying or media facilities) was ever offered. I came by any

supports that existed purely by accident and observation. As demonstrated by my thwarted attempts to access the library collection, support staff are reluctant to take the risk or expend the effort required to facilitate educational innovation. Libraries were closed when students were available to make use of them; teachers could only access the English language collection by appointment. Library staff were really only shelving clerks, unable to provide any reference assistance to me. The stacks at the main Chinese language library are closed, preventing browsing in an autonomous search for information.

As a foreigner, I viewed these barriers only as frustrations rather than as social dictum, and I remained persistent. Chinese teachers may well have been unable to break the barriers, have given up, or not tried at all, rather than lose face in the attempt. My demonstration that access to alternative learning resources is possible could have served as an example of the very subtle influence that foreigners may have on change in Chinese education (Hayhoe, 1989). It is to be hoped that student observation of the effect of my commitment to goal achievement will influence their future teacher practice. As Zhi Hui acknowledged, China's open doors mean that the people observe foreign ways through a variety of media, and are, ever so slowly, changed by them. We Foreign Experts are one of the media through whom students observe those ways.

Delivery of Language Education

Language education delivery is strongly framed by an orientation toward reproducing a teaching style based on authoritarian transmission of knowledge by explication of canonical texts. There exists little motivation for pedagogical innovation as traditional teaching methods focused toward examinations obtain admirable student results. These are the topics covered in this section. Ai Ci's comment on what and how teachers teach addressed many of these issues.

> Different people have different unique ways to do it [to teach], and different tolerancy [sic] levels. Sometimes if you teach something you know very well, then you can let it out [transfer it to students]. You can answer all questions in that area, afterwards you have some exercises. How to control the class is always an issue. You have to have something to teach that the students don't know about, and you explain it very well. Students will say, wow, yes, you are right! This is usually the case. Teachers like to do it that way.

Teacher legitimacy rests on mastery of a classic literary and philosophical canon. Clearly, the emphasis in teacher education is on delivery and acquisition of subject area content knowledge as opposed to educational theory, pedagogical content knowledge,

or methodology. These are considered practical rather than theoretical concerns (Ting, 1987). Further, considered quantitatively unmeasurable they are not considered important for teachers to have, or for students to acquire (Ford, 1988; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Hayhoe, 1989; Liu, 1988; Paine, 1990; Penner, 1995).

The curriculum often contains no electives, consisting only of required courses in a particular subject area with core courses in politics and education (Paine, 1990; Ford, 1988). In her analysis of curriculum Paine (1990) stated that in a 4-year B.A. program 60-70% of course time is spent mastering canon in an area of content knowledge. That area of content knowledge corresponds directly to subjects taught in the school curriculum. 95% of course time is spent studying the broader content range for students in a 2-3 year program for elementary teachers.

Educational pedagogy, methods and psychology have been restored to the curriculum since the Cultural Revolution. But together they constitute only 5-8% of course time and desperately need enrichment from current theory (Zhang, 1995). As is typical, teaching methods at my institute was a one-semester course (average 3.9% of course time). A teaching practicum of 4-6 weeks in the final term consists largely of observing in-service teachers who are distinguished by deep subject matter knowledge. A student teacher would typically deliver only one or two memorized lessons cooperatively prepared with other student teachers under close supervision.

Innovation

Strong curricular framing persists as neither teachers nor students feel any significant degree of autonomy. They have virtually no choice of subject area major, teachers, courses or research topics (Ford, 1988). They are not allowed to in select, organize, pace or time knowledge transmission or acquisition (Paine, 1990). Nonetheless, some autonomous curricular innovation is attempted by especially secure professors. As Zhi Hui said,

> I'm a very confident teacher. There is a shortage of foreign language teachers. Because of this I have more freedom in the way I teach [and the innovations I implement] because of this shortage. If my superiors say they don't like it, I can easily just pack up and leave that university. This attitude helps me really a lot. I just don't care. Teachers of other subject areas do not have this freedom. Teachers of mathematics would have a much harder time to find another position.
>
> However, even for my colleagues, it depends a lot on their own confidence in themselves. But I like me... .

> [There is an attitudinal change afoot] but it is extremely slow, almost unnoticeable. Nonetheless, I'm sure it is coming because the country has this open door policy. People now have much more open access to media, newspaper, TV, to information about what is happening outside the country. And these things influence you subconsciously. You don't have even to make a conscious effort to imitate [emphasis added], you are just changed by them. But tradition dies hard....
>
> My ability to be innovative or creative is very much my individual personality. It's not my age group, it's just me. The change is coming but it is really very, very slow.

Despite the receptiveness of motivated teachers to new teaching techniques, individual autonomy, creativity and methodological innovation are unusual and difficult to implement in an atmosphere where the pressure to conform to traditional expectations is intense (Liu, 1988).

Examination Achievement

Perhaps the most significant impediment to change is the examination regimen and the reverential esteem attributed to examination success. Intense competition for good jobs and places in post-secondary or graduate level education makes attaining excellent standing on at least a hundred formal examinations in scores of subjects from primary to graduate school a prerequisite (Liu, 1988). College enrollment is limited to those who make good grades in English. All university students must obtain at least a passing grade on Band exams Levels 1-6. Considered only minimum competency for English majors, these exams do not form part of their state-required standardized battery (Hayhoe, 1989). Only recently,

> from Band 4 to Band 6 there was a listening and a writing portion [added] in the tests, and at Band 6 there was a speaking ability portion. ... All these tests are [centrally organized and nationally] standardized and everything. Even the listening and the speaking part were all standardized, so there is a format you have to follow (Ai Ci).

Therefore, as Ai Ci said, teaching is focused on "implementing that curriculum" [sic], as determined by the National Education Committee, which will help students pass the National College Entrance and Band 1-6 College English Tests. Examination emphasis on sentence structure, vocabulary, literal comprehension, and translation implicitly subverts curriculum intentions to teach language for purposes of active communication (Penner, 1995).

Students and teachers alike prefer to employ grammar-translation of the 19th century and audio-lingual teaching methods of the 1950's which fit well with Confucian knowledge structures. But these methods are acknowledged to have produced very capable students, teachers and translators who cannot communicate in English (Ting, 1987). Sometimes students can correctly analyze the function and define every item in a complex sentence, yet not understand the meaning it carries, nor formulate a spontaneous subsequent utterance. Teachers feel that new communicative methods will not adequately prepare students for their exams, despite that, as Ai Ci noted, both students and in-service teachers are open to new ideas (Field, 1984; Liu, 1988), (Zhuang, 1984). Ai Ci and Farr, a FE interviewee, agree with Liu (1988) that basic reforms in testing methods must precede changes to classroom practice.

Insights Gained

The wide variety of teacher training institutes, the degree of hierarchy among them together with prestige attached to being either teachers or students in particular institutes results in very little interaction among educational participants at various levels of the hierarchy. Teacher education is institutionally specialized and isolated in a context of scarce resources and ambiguous purpose with severe problems in recruitment, certification standards, and retention in the profession. Debates about teacher education run rampant in the press as well as among faculty and students alike (Paine, 1990).

Despite its significant drawbacks, teachers are constrained by tradition from adopting methods which require greater student participation and risk taking in class. Restricted student access to library resources that do exist protects the power teachers have in their knowledge, but also restricts China's espoused desire for industrial modernization. A significant contribution to that modernization is inherent in a body of creative, original thinkers. The implications and ramifications of radical departures from traditional methods keeps policy makers focused on the tension created by the contradiction of seeking economic growth through educational change and maintaining Confucian knowledge structures seen as essential to the political *status quo*. Policy change dictates have not resulted in significant changes to the examination structures or curriculum materials that would support it. Teacher education continues to be significantly influenced by traditional cultural attitudes toward teachers, what classroom education is, and what teacher preparation shall be (Paine, 1990).

Internalized Experience of Teacher Education

There are but a few exceptions to the generalization that teachers who graduate from low status teacher training institutes are destined for low status, low paying careers. The goal, therefore, of the majority of student teachers is to be successful enough at their studies that they can avoid the profession completely. Alternative careers motivate students in diverse but specific ways to learn oral communication, to read and write in the foreign language or pass their exams as they strive to escape the countryside, the profession, or the country. For all, passing their standardized college exams is pre-requisite to goal achievement.

Students have very definite and restricted ideas about what acquiring foreign language should involve. Prior experience of Chinese language and foreign language learning increases skepticism about alternative learning strategies and styles foreign experts might introduce. Learning strategies students are accustomed to for foreign language learning meet their pre-requisite goal of exam success through tightly structured analysis and deductive acquisition of facts. Those strategies do not, however, meet the additional goal of many students for communicative competence. Characteristic learning style preferences of Chinese students further constrain them from active language output or in-class participation.

Goals of Student Teachers

Generally speaking, students would not voluntarily choose to attend a teacher-training institute. Rather they would end up there by default or placement as a last resort to higher education. The student population in teacher training institutes is disproportionately represented by less able and rural high school graduates. The stipend paid only to teacher candidates is likely to be a significant initiative to rural students. Paine (1990) found only 4-23% of students surveyed were content with their state-designated future career placement. Farr found students practiced passive resistance, handing in blank pages in response to an initial assignment to write a paragraph entitled, "Why I want to be a teacher". Bluntly and generally put, Farr and Jasmine, FE interviewees, agreed that the goal of most student teachers is to pass their exams and avoid a teaching career. In their senior year many students conduct a very active job search in government, the diplomatic core, joint venture companies, tourism or international trade (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Lasisi, Falodun, & Onyhalu, 1988; Ting, 1987; Paine, 1990; Ford, 1988)).

Low pay, low social status of teachers and teacher education institutes relative to their academic counterparts, together with the historical political vulnerability of teachers, exacerbate the unlikelihood of China being successful in attempting to quadruple the output of qualified teachers by the year 2000. The profession continues to be unattractive. Severe teacher shortages exist in virtually every subject area with the exception of mathematics (Paine, 1990). Attempts to persuade students of the non-remunerative benefits of teaching do not convince them (Zhang, 1995).

Motivation to Acquire English

Student motivation to work hard at college depends largely upon their career aspirations and potential to attain them. These motivations vary from inherent interest in languages, desire to communicate with native speakers within their own country, meeting institutional requirements and reading and writing in a field of expertise as students work to increase their opportunities for social and economic advancement (Byram et al., 1994). Ai Ci said that although female students outnumber males in the FL subject specialization, universities try to reach a gender balance by having pass requirements on exams higher for females (TOEFL score of 550 vs. 570). Because work units generally prefer to hire males, females must work extra-hard to obtain good positions. He said that employers believe that "female teachers will just have children and then they will have to spend a lot of time on the family".

Countryside students who see teaching as a way of escaping poverty, girls satisfied with their career possibilities, and boys who realistically aspire to higher alternatives do work hard to acquire the level of language competency they believe is necessary to attain their goals. In his third year at university, Ai Ci, a countryside student, developed a desire to go abroad to study.

> At the very beginning [of university] I viewed grammatical knowledge, linguistic knowledge, as very important in our studies, and later on I changed this idea, and I began to understand the importance of communicative ability, socializing with other people, trying to exchange ideas related to language. I think that's also part of the contribution that the foreign teachers, and also some exchange students from America and Canada made. They brought that kind of thing onto our campus, because we have to communicate to learn about other cultures, to learn about other countries.
>
> Also on our campus the students set up various kinds of clubs which were sponsored by the Department of foreign languages and the University, and we have English Language Club [organized as an open house at the office of the FE] where people can go to socialize [read, watch English language

> television] with other people through the target language. At that time there were not a lot of extra-curricular activities, so students enjoyed going to these gatherings to speak and listen in English language. By attending such clubs we also got to know students from other departments, other universities, and getting to know a variety of different kinds of people.

Farr found that one of his students, acting upon his personal decision to take advantage of opportunities to expand language learning, did indeed, progress very quickly. This student's motivation and participation in any out-of-class L2 opportunities available may have provided him with proportionately more L2 input than that his peers availed themselves of. This student intentionally maximized input and feedback, thus optimizing comprehensible intake and output (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Swain, 1993).

Some learners want native-like pronunciation to demonstrate they are well educated while others wish to achieve sufficient language competence that they are able to converse with native speakers and understand the spoken language. Others desire only competence in reading and writing to serve their research and translation needs. I found that many males, accepting that they would be teachers, worked only hard enough to pass exams prerequisite to receiving their degree or diploma. Females seemed to more sincerely try to become competent speakers of English, effective teachers who could facilitate their students' acquisition of L2 competency, and be more accepting of cultural difference (Byram, Esarte-SarriesTaylor, & Allatt, 1991).

Student Learning

As I taught "The Chinese way" two fundamental problems related to students learning English came to the fore. One was related primarily to language production and the other, a more deeply seated one, to cultural expectations about what constitutes literature and the learning strategies employed in understanding it. You will recall that in the lead-up to the novel study I asked students to read poetry aloud. Initially, I was extremely frustrated by what I perceived to be their unwilling, incapable or uncooperative attitude in attempting to use appropriate intonation and phrasing to express emotive qualities in the texts.

Secondly, the study of authentic novels dealt positively with one set of student expectations while presenting other difficulties. It provided access to aspects of intercultural awareness in text and through teacher explanations, discussion, examples, and, on occasion, modeling. In the reading of prose passages from their anthologies students who spoke out insisted upon the wanted me to provide explicit statements of

deeper meanings in text, the revelation of life lessons (Sampson, 1990), asking "Why did the author write the story?" (Trimmer & Warnock, 1992). Information provided to students in the text of anthology excerpts, even supplemented with teacher information, simply did not provide sufficient schema to permit students to understand elements of theme bound to cultural and historical circumstances (Trimmer & Warnock, 1992).

In short complete folkloric works students were satisfied with the cultural content and life lessons taught, yet rejected them on the basis that they were not by famous authors nor sufficiently intellectually stimulating, despite their high level of engagement in those texts. I interpreted student comments as a desire for complex text by the classic authors represented in their anthology. Yet I felt that the bottom-up learning strategies students typically employed would not stand them in good stead as they tackled the complexities of reading a whole novel. In this section I try to understand how student reading was effected by prior language learning experience.

Chinese Language

Chinese is a monosyllabic ideographic tonal language wherein each character or syllable is heavy with meaning. In its written form a character provides visual clues that enable its user to select the correct contextualized meaning of the character for spoken representation in one of four tones. Context alone provides information as to possession, gender and verb tense. There are no articles and relatively few prepositions. Every character, every unit of meaning, is essential to comprehension. A minor stroke variation and context in the written language on a base of some 200 radical characters designates particularized meaning from a connotative set of meanings. For example, the character for "dog", will, depending upon stroking variations, also mean hunting, wolf, mad, violent, solitary, violate, invade, animal, prison, or crafty (Sampson, 1990). An educated Chinese would have a sight vocabulary of some 6-10,000 characters. Thus Chinese writing is learned in a highly analytic way that enables holistic searching for contextualized meaning (Field, 1984).

When students read aloud L1 transfer was evident in their flat and/or jerky unexpressive unemotional delivery. Each character in Chinese is equally stressed in the spoken language, separating it from its previous or following unit of meaning (Swan & Smith, 1987). In English, students did not use tonal variation to distinguish meaning from words in a complete utterance. They did not 'read with expression'. They tended to pronounce each syllable, each function word or word in a phrase, equally, as they would in Chinese.

It seemed that their effort and ability to read expressively increased following a review of phrasing concepts and rules of syllable emphasis. I would generally read a stanza

aloud, follow that with a choral reading, some individual practice in groups, and a homework assignment for more practice, before calling upon students to perform in class. Most students called upon enjoyed opportunities to display the results of their efforts in class, often presenting the piece from memory or with very limited recourse to the text. In retrospect, perhaps my assignment was misinterpreted as a memorization task.

The second and much more complex problem presented as students grappled with understanding prose passages in their anthologies and later, in reading their novels. Beginning and intermediate readers, expecting every word to carry context for a meaning set, laboured over their readings. Ai Ci noted that long passages were especially arduous because students read word by word, analyzing sentence structures and applying linguistic rules, looking up every unknown word (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Field, 1984; Liu, 1988; Ting, 1987). It is possible that this problem of reading word by word is further exacerbated by the relatively narrower field of reading vision required to read a meaning unit (word vs. character) (Swan & Smith, 1987). The diversity of influences affecting English language reading comprehension mandate teaching reading strategies that will enable students to gain the deeper understandings obtainable from holistic readings.

Language Learning Strategies and Styles

Students are accustomed to successful language learning being judged according to their ability to memorize and master text and lecture content. They passively wait to be filled up with knowledge. They read, analyze, paraphrase, practice dialogue patterns, substitution drills, translate and do exercises until the class is over (Liu, 1988; Penner, 1995; Ting, 1987). Ai Ci said that students try to "utilize linguistic rules from lessons, and deduce other things" which will assist them in acquiring language competency. The ability to deduce those "other things" requires successful application of a range of learning strategies, those steps taken by learners to make intake and use more productive, facilitating acquisition, storage, retrieval, and information use (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). Habits formed that allowed them to do well in intensive reading, carefully deciphering and analyzing, relying on dictionaries and grammar books for meaning, may actually be counterproductive to language learning because they do not encourage students' personal interactions or holistic context searches (Ting, 1987). Traditional language teaching in the Chinese way does not allow for individual flexibility or spontaneous language use; rather it provides the learner with the one "correct" interpretation or response alternative (Li, 1984). Information gained analytically or

memorized for recitation may actually be irretrievable for holistic active communication purposes (Ellis, 1988; Li, 1984).

Many students, as a result of previous L2 learning experience, are fossilized at the level of concrete strategy application (Barnitz, 1986). In reality, students are not able to transfer generalizations about language without explicit teaching (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Harvey, 1985; Ma, 1992; Tyacke, 1991). Ehrman and Oxford (1990), Carrell (1984) and Field (1984) suggest that although L2 learners employ a range of top-down strategies to learn and increase their ability in their native language, these skills are transferred to a lesser extent to the SL learning environment. Novel study questions and activities most often required students to answer a number of related questions, and draw from their interpretations a generalization.

Experienced Chinese readers of English agree they use abstract learning strategies to negotiate meaning in their written L1. But they believe that using these strategies for English is "not possible, not even thinkable" (Field, 1984, p. 175), that not knowing and understanding every word of a reading would only cause confusion. Global strategy use is encouraged early in the process of learning to read for native speakers of either English or Chinese but it is virtually ignored by Chinese English teachers. Their own prior experience of English learning may have created a higher comfort level in linguistic analysis. Thus, extensive reading, where abstract learning strategies from L1 would otherwise be taught for L2 application, often becomes another course in close analytical reading (Field, 1984).

The cultural environment of educational institutions trains a citizenry whose personalities conform to social norms. The work of Ehrman and Oxford (1990) showed correspondences among personality types, learning style and strategy preference. The in-class personality of the majority of my students reflected characteristics they referred to as "introverts" and "sensers" who dislike surprises and public risk-taking of any sort. Such students prefer tasks that require close analysis, carefully structured in lessons closely monitored by an authority figure. This is not surprising in a learning environment where students are required to conform in a tightly structured hierarchical society where they have little status. While capable of using the broader range of socially interactive learning styles and abstract learning strategies preferred by extroverts, students asked to use non-preferred styles or strategies like experienced some anxiety in the effort (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). Student motivation to expend that effort in classes taught by FEs depends upon their recognition of the value of developing communicative competence and ability to actively participate (Swain & Miccoli, 1994).

Students are highly motivated to work hard to achieve attainable goals that will provide social or economic mobility. Countryside students see teaching as a way of escaping hard physical labour; girls are satisfied that the profession will be a fulfilling one. For all students, passing exams is pre-requisite to obtaining goal achievement. Those who come to understand that acquiring communicative competency will further their career goals, may not understand the implications of alternative L2 learning strategies. They may be unwilling or unable to practice alternative learning styles. Therefore, foreign experts must make explicit the applicability of abstract L1 strategies for L2 improvement.

Insights Gained

Socio-cultural and existential impacts on the roles of student teachers in classes taught by foreign experts are wide-ranging. The Confucianist nature of Chinese society is evident throughout education. It stratifies educational institutions, interpersonal relationships in the workplace, among teachers and students, and isolates groups. Values around power, group conformity and solidarity, and maintaining self-esteem constrain students in their in-class interactions. Students know that critical questioning can result in dire consequences, as it did for intellectuals at any level in the Cultural Revolution. That most widely known incident is an example of just how severe the penalty can be for critically questioning behavior.

Confucianist hierarchies seen as essential to maintaining social order through the observance of strict sets of rules carry over into curriculum design, language learning and teaching. Language learning is viewed according to that facet of Confucianism which views knowledge as the memorization of a system of rules and application of a set of habits. Perhaps teaching is viewed as requiring proportionately more skill than mental labour (Paine, 1990). Thus perhaps Confucianist goals of literacy for self-growth and betterment are protected in the halls of higher status institutes where student teachers are not taught.

The existential environment interacts with socio-cultural history to impact student roles. They are suspicious of foreigners and believe that traditional learning methods of the past which facilitate examination success should continue to serve their needs. Government policy dictating communicative language teaching does little to change the practice of learning or teaching. The motivation to adapt is rare on an individual, let alone at an institutional level. Foreign ideas regarding ways of learning language without top-down changes to examination structures that support those methods continue to lack credibility. Only a tiny minority of students is willing to take the risks involved to acquire communicative competency when opportunities exist. Those risks

are seen to require denial of deeply rooted cultural values of group solidarity and conformity.

Students' internalized experience of teacher education is characterized by ambivalence. They have been assigned to become teachers. If they accept that lot they commit themselves to a life in poverty. The status of teachers as intellectuals is of little comfort in these economic times, especially given certain recent historical events. Steeped in tradition and suspicious of foreigners, they see themselves being asked to deny their past and adopt foreign ways of learning. Only by connecting traditional ways of seeing and learning integrated with the higher goals of Confucianist literacy will students understand that they can maintain their identity and develop communicative competence (Sampson, 1990).

Chinese students are accustomed to, expect and prefer to continue to learn EFL using strategies and methods with which they are familiar, hoping that somehow they can be viewed within the context of a Western communicative approach in accordance with the dictates of education policy (Ma, 1992). They are secure in the knowledge, that, as in the past, these traditional learning methods will enable them to pass their exams. Nonetheless, many look to foreign expatriates to help them gain communicative competence. The source of their frustration is that by attempting to learn from foreigners, in foreign ways, they are insecure.

Despite a traditional approach to teaching that inspires fierce individual competition, students work best in groups when faced with the security threat posed by a foreign teacher with non-traditional expectations. I put their insecurity to positive use by requiring students to explore a variety of learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). Working in small groups students were freer to express themselves without fear of reprisal from the larger group. When allowed to select their own work mates they could work with trusted peers and thereby optimally exploit their creative thinking resources. I turned over responsibility for accomplishing reading goals set by students themselves to them, imbuing them with autonomy for their own learning and self-directedness in meeting group expectations (Murray, 1994; Tyacke, 1991). Acting on intuition alone in this Chinese context, I empowered my students to rely on themselves and their group solidarity and their cultural norms to guide them in achieving an acceptable level of conformity (Maley, 1986; Murray, 1994; Swain & Miccoli, 1994). Nonetheless, in so doing I regularly violated their expectations of me as teacher.

In the context of their work in small groups, I encouraged students to use abstract learning strategies, not unlike I had when I taught novel studies and research to junior high students in Canada. I required that students adhere to a reading schedule that

permitted them to finish the novel in a prescribed length of time; they would not have time to look up all unknown words. I found questions that arose were generally directed to me by the group chairperson, or the daily rotated group leader (Brick, 1991). My questions in circulating among the class were directed to each group as wholes. Thereby no one was singled out for embarrassment.

I explicitly taught information processing strategies, using context clues to meaning, taking notes, outlining, always modeling my expectations and alternatives (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). Students used the context of readings and collaborated with their colleagues as they reviewed and/or developed learning strategies to help them (Swain & Miccoli, 1994). Journal entries and class discussions required them to use context to understand passages and chapters, to infer and predict what would happen next.

Whether the result of feeling I had nothing to lose, intuition or a desire for administrative approval in my own insecure circumstances (Maley, 1986), I had used traditional teaching methods students were accustomed to in the first term. Looking back, I realize those months of tedium gave us a space in which to build a comfort level which tolerated different expectations, to observe each other and build a level of understanding and trust (Tyacke, 1991). Students were not suspicious, as in Ai Ci's case, that I was "doing some research project" for which they were the unknowing subjects. Then, staying with classic poetry texts while employing some transitional innovations, I built upon their content schema in FL literature. That degree of "fit" ensured that the innovations were not rejected out of hand (Carrell, 1984).

As time went on I found students experienced increasing success in literary analysis, demonstrating more and more confidence in expressing their thoughts according to their own interpretations. Careful planning, provision of rationale, guidelines and lesson structure consistent with established expectations lead to success even though the content was different and presentation method was new. Students seemed inherently gratified with their new found ability to say more in conversation than "who wrote what when and whether it is any good or not" (Maley, 1989), as Farr and Ai Ci indicated would usually be the limit of motivation for literary education. The repetitive nature of classes expanded their context base, supplementing it with information according to which they could judge the appropriacy of their responses to my demands. This schema likely overrode the usual short-circuiting effect of limited SL proficiency as students reactivated holistic top-down learning strategies with familiar analytical bottom-up strategies in an interactive process. They had an established, albeit induced, schema and background knowledge of English literature and poetry upon which to draw as they attempted the challenging task of personally interpreting a classic literary novel (Barnitz, 1986; Carrell, 1984). Though I was only intuitively and subjectively aware of preferred learning styles

and strategy preferences, I designed a unit that provided some flexibility and opportunity for autonomous practice, discussion and interpretation.

Students were able to bring previous language learning success and abstract strategy awareness to the L2 situation. Traditional ways of teaching English which served China's past needs for competent academics and intellectuals who could read and write academic English did not graduate speakers competent in language use for the international workplace (Ting, 1987). The intensely prescriptive nature of past teaching methods meant that it has not been difficult to fathom why, at entrance to university, Ai Ci felt as many Chinese students do, that he "had learned very little English in the previous five years' study." I hoped my teaching would engender freedom to express thoughts and negotiate meanings through language as a tool for communicative eloquence and self-growth (Richards, 1986). Indeed, my teaching strategies facilitated student gains in communicative competency by integrating the new with the old, providing CLT with the structure students needed (Littlewood, 1984).

Overall, while both challenging and frustrating, the novel study unit was a success. Students learned new ways of dealing with classic literature (Thomson, 1992). I learned many things about Chinese culture and educational hierarchies. I fulfilled, and in some ways, I believe, exceeded expectations of foreigners' ability to accomplish teaching tasks in China by finding a way through the bureaucratic labyrinth. From conception to evaluation, this fifteen-week unit provided both students and FE with considerable awareness of the schema for education culture we brought to class. The following chapter reflects my continuing efforts to further understanding of the expectations students had of me as their teacher, and how those expectations differed from mine of them as events transpired in some classes I taught in China.

Chapter IV Student Expectations of English Teachers

Explorations in this chapter have helped me understand student expectations based on primogenitary relationships revering the wisdom of past generations and the authority of teachers in the education hierarchy. Students expect to behave in ways consistent with Confucian moral integrity, to restrain their egos and observe rituals of the supreme order, to know and adhere to social roles dictated for them without wishing to exceed them. In these ways guiding interests of social harmony, order, good government and eternal peace are maintained (Ting, 1987). Thus teachers are imbued with an expectation that they are all knowing, never-erring superior authority figures beyond question, even though they may lack advanced English language competency.

In this chapter, I focus on the role the teacher plays in Chinese education. Drawing upon the research literature, themes from the six interviews and reflections upon my experiences in China, I consider Chinese student expectations of teachers in general and the FEs expectations of him/herself.

Chinese Student Expectations of Teachers

The teacher's role, just as much as the student's role, is significantly influenced by socio-cultural history (Paine, 1990; Stern, 1992). Responsible for "nurturing the holistic development of students" (Paine, 1990, p. 143), a teacher is expected to be "an exemplar in social and political life" who combines "academic mastery and moral suasion" (Paine, 1990, p. 143). Therefore, students expect their teachers to meet certain standards of character, pedagogic competence, English language competency, and delivery of language education. Teachers should be of high moral character and spirituality, possess a grasp of the art, craft, science and "laws" of education, and broad and deep knowledge of fields peripheral to their content area. The complexity of factors influencing student expectations of teacher role made integrating them a formidable task. It became evident that students incorrectly apply socio-cultural teacher role expectations to Chinese and FE teachers alike (Chow, 1993; Smith, 1994). They expect that FE will not behave or teach or relate with them any differently. Nonetheless, they expect the teaching of FEs will increase their L2 competency.

Character

Teachers hold a special place in the lives of students. Ai Ci agreed with Sampson (1984), Fox (1994) and Jasmine, saying the "teacher [is] held above students, on a pedestal, and according to Zhi Hui, acts in loco parentis as advisor, benefactor, mentor, authority figure, professional and personal model. This lofty perception of teacher is reflected by the furniture typically supplied in classrooms - a lectern only, no desk, no chair (Ford, 1988). It is as if the teacher needs nothing but his/her own content base of factual knowledge and a textbook to fulfill the complex task of teaching. Ai Ci described a good teacher as one who is responsible in the preparation of lessons and duty-bound.

> I think if the teacher is working hard, and really cares about the students ... is always in his office, and trying to help students, everyone knows. If someone is really nice to you, people know. If someone is pretending, people also know. ... The Chinese proverb that applies is, "A drop of water (support) given will yield an ocean of appreciation in return."

Psychologically, "teachers should be career oriented, devoted to their students and confident in their career choice" (Zhang, 1995, p. 148). They should recognize the non-remunerative rewards of teaching, (especially as the financial benefits are negligible), be resolute and courageous enough to overcome professional difficulties, creative and eager to progress, and be able to deal effectively with a variety of people and situations, and love their students (Paine, 1990). Having all of these qualities, the teacher's job is to withdraw the knowledge from the book and transplant it into the students' heads (Liu, 1988) "in efficient, artful ways that render it understandable" (Paine, 1990, p. 143). Teachers who have and can dispense that knowledge in a controlled classroom atmosphere are respected since they have sufficient background knowledge to effectively dispense it to students.

Asked how he expected his FE teacher would be able to assist him in increasing his L2 competency, Zhi Hui admitted he "never thought about how, I viewed that as the teacher's responsibility. I was interested in *what* he would teach me, *not how* he would achieve that goal". This despite that he was a teacher trainee! This statement implies that teacher is expected to assume responsibility for assuring student learning (Penner, 1995). These expectations are great, indeed, when one considers the professional qualifications of SL teachers as described below.

Pedagogic Competence

A concept of pedagogic competence, all that is implied in being a "good teacher" places first priority on subject area knowledge, skills and abilities. Of secondary importance is a knowledge of teaching methods - how teachers teach and how students learn, what is taught and learned, how teaching and learning should be evaluated. Teachers should also possess general knowledge peripherally relevant to their field, including general knowledge of language, literature, foreign language, philosophy, arts, and the ability to do independent research (Zhang, 1995).

The level of academic certification for college teacher educators is less than would be required in Canada. Most Chinese teacher educators, including senior instructors at universities, hold only a four year Bachelor of Arts degree in their content field, either literature or linguistics, which gives them extensive knowledge of literary history or linguistic forms and structures (Burnaby, 1989; Ford, 1988; Penner, 1995). Students with excellent grades and powerful political connections may be offered college instructor's positions immediately upon receipt of their B.A.

Language training since 1978 has provided some exposure to communicative techniques but there has been little transfer of the approach in Chinese teacher practice (Penner, 1995). The emphasis of past experience and training fell predominantly in strategies of audio-lingual drill and practice, explication of texts, lecture and translation. These methods are maintained as the base of teacher practice (Ford, 1988; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Lortie, 1975; Ma, 1992; White, 1989).

In teacher training, emphasis on language content more than language use or teaching methods predominates. Conformity of pronunciation is obtained by study of phonetics and direct method teaching, listening to and mimicking native speaker pronunciation from audio tapes. Teaching strategies of grammar translation, audio-lingual mimicry and memorization ("mim-mem"), and emphasis on memory and analysis, fit well with established educational practices. Soviet style intensive and extensive reading build on Chinese respect for literature and provide the skills necessary for technical reading, translation and passing exams (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). Teachers who have a thorough knowledge base about language and competence in traditional teaching methods that transmit this kind of knowledge, which leads to examination success, are respected.

In content areas of literature or linguistics the college teacher is a master "steeped in textual knowledge" (Paine, 1990, p. 143). Many FL graduates are highly competent in literary classics and have more grammatical knowledge than educated native speakers (Ting, 1987). Jasmine, a FE, found that Chinese teachers usually possess far greater

expertise in lexicography, grammar and linguistic structure than she did. When foreign experts are available, Chinese teachers generally teach translation, reading and grammar since, as Zhi Hui said, it is generally acknowledged that a prerequisite to English teaching competence is solid knowledge of basic grammar.

Language Competence

Instructors at better universities now have English retraining or training, and thus a basic level of English language competence. However, lacking any deep awareness of methodological alternatives in background knowledge from experience as grade school students, nor from their own teacher education, their ability to practice innovatively is limited.

Zhi Hui, a student at a high-ranking teachers' university, said, "My Chinese teachers were very good in their spoken English, and I still admire their ability. They are all now in the United States. But at that time [their competency] could not be compared with a native speaker." At institutes of lesser status, however, many teachers function at the outer limits of their knowledge base (Penner, 1995). At my college the majority of Chinese teachers of English taught in Chinese, lacking confidence and/or English language competence. On the verge of retirement some older "Russian retreads", re-deployed and/or retrained in English in an audio-lingual approach during the Cultural Revolution, have very little English language competence (Penner, 1995). Despite admirable content area knowledge, teachers nonetheless accurately perceive their communicative competence to be inadequate (Burnaby & Sun, 1989).

Teachers whose English language competence is greater are virtually self-taught since their teachers possessed little proficiency. Self-education will not, however, bring concomitant professional advancement without official certification achievable by taking recognized university courses (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). That may explain in part why Zhi Hui, who had advanced English language competence upon arrival in Canada from his prestigious north China teachers' college, believes that China's current teacher education meets the country's needs. He said he thinks that little competency is necessary to teach English at the upper middle school level. In his opinion,

> Once you are familiar with them ["that classroom English"], and the few grammatical terms there, and those you could do in Chinese. By the time they graduate the students [at teachers' colleges] would know them.

If this attitude is pervasive it does not bode well for future independent efforts of Chinese English teachers to independently supplement their existing competence. Given very

limited opportunities outside English language classrooms to use their L2, such an attitude toward in-class situations indicates little teacher initiative to strive to achieve English at their own I + 1 level of competence.

Innovative Practice

Zhi Hui did go on to say that young teachers who feel competent in the English language, are confident of their ability to teach effectively, and secure in their job status, are more likely to attempt to be innovative in their practice. Given the high demand for English language teachers, those who possess the competency to teach in English need feel less threatened by traditional systemic constraints. He contends that competent Chinese FL teachers have considerable freedom in their practice. Farr noted,

> After I had been there for a month or so, I met a Chinese guy from another teachers' college, for elementary teachers, I believe. ... He taught his students how to teach EFL to kids in elementary school. A number of key schools were introducing English at the elementary school level, and this professor had written a couple of papers about a communicative approach similar enough to Krashen.
>
> His views reinforced what I was trying to do, and I talked to him about some of the activities he did to assure that his students were not just studying grammar and syntax, but were using language and had lots of opportunities to acquire the language through "I+1" sorts of activities. It became clear to me that I wasn't the only one who was trying to use a communicative or "Krashen I+1" approach to language acquisition rather than language study. I went over to visit a couple of his classes when he had students doing things, a lot of small group stuff, a lot of teacher-directed whole class discussion kinds of things.

Innovative teachers have adopted strategies from the audio-lingual and direct methods which allow them to maintain the customary teacher centred, submissive student-teacher relationship with the prescribed text as sole lesson support (Liu, 1988). When faced with teaching situations about which they are unsure, teachers fall back on the traditionally authoritative role of the teacher. Zhi Hui acknowledged that, "I did/(and would) [added in member check] caution them several times in class that they are students and I am the teacher, and require to be treated as such." When teachers lack confidence in their proficiency they are more likely to maintain the *status quo*.

Teachers do not take an active role in initiating opportunities for experimentation (Zhuang, 1984). Like Ai Ci, most teachers prefer to take a more passive approach to experimenting with communicative strategies (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Lortie, 1975; Ma,

1992; White, 1989). Asked how he would provide awareness of Western teaching methods, Ai Ci said,

> I may be able to if there is an opportunity. ... I would try to make some tapes to take to my classrooms, that show how classes [in Canada] are organized, how the teacher was, and I would make some explanations. ... And then I can show them [through the tapes], and they can make a comparison.

Lacking confidence in their own competence, teachers do not experiment freely.

Delivery of Language Education

In a society that places great importance on conformity and adherence to hierarchical social structures and rules, students expect that teachers will be strict in exercising their authority in the classroom, punctilious in delivering the curriculum content and generous in releasing their knowledge. Both student and teacher appeal to the higher authority of state approved texts, demonstrating a mind-set of the propriety of an hierarchical stratification (Ting, 1987). From middle school to fourth year university, teachers have a textbook and teachers guide, which may be supplemented with outside resource texts. In the context of lessons where teachers do 80% of the talking, lectures, often delivered memory, are the most commonly used teaching strategy (Ford, 1988; Liu, 1988). "Teacher will just give what is important, and they [students] will memorize it. That is one of the traditions, the culture," Ai Ci stated.

The judgments of language teacher as sole authority regarding language related matters, are assumed to be final, not open to question, interruption or content challenge. This notion deprives both teachers and learners of the need to experiment or risk error. Such active communication would mean straying from the "word", the supreme order, would raise questions, which if asked would disrupt the teaching plan, and possibly result in teacher loss of face (Li, 1984; Ting, 1987).

Lesson Structure

"China's educational policy holds the teacher responsible for planning the content of classes in accord with designated goals, the syllabus, and students' level of preparation and ability" (Zhang, 1995, p. 149). Policy statements indicate teachers are expected to eclectically select and combine optimal teaching methods for the situation as they design and guide classroom instruction. In practice, teachers are much less autonomous. They

generally use a focus text as the basis for demonstrating a grammatical point, linguistic rule or language content focus.

Lessons typically consist of five elements, predictable from start to finish every day, in accordance with a detailed syllabus. A lesson would begin with a review of previous related concepts, and then introduce new learnings to be gained. These new concepts would be explained, then consolidated with exercises completed in class. Sometimes there would be homework assignments (Penner, 1995). Without that structure Ai Ci , like other teachers, feel students are unable to identify additional accumulations of language facts for their knowledge base.

Chinese teachers of similar courses plan lessons cooperatively, discussing teaching programs and materials to ensure their effort is not duplicated. Despite the level of their cooperative planning, there exists little or no integration of course content or teaching objectives. For example, Zhi Hui said

> I taught mostly translation, English reading, the grammar course at that time. ... The discussions took place in Chinese. It was not my concern to do English in the translation course. The purpose of the course was to give students practice in translation, and to develop their own understandings of the 'what is and how to do' of translation. It was to get them started to be thinkers, rather than simply training technicians. I wanted to give them opportunities to think as translators, to make them able to independently produce "good translations".

Rather, it seems cooperative planning ensures a level of teacher conformity and within course repetition of concepts sufficient for knowledge to be gained. Despite that cooperation, opportunities for integration of concepts among courses taught is omitted from the planning process. Instead, teachers work together to predict and resolve difficult language problems that might arise, analyze and translate sentences, and work out what answers will be accepted as correct. While this planning process provides security for teachers, it does not foster creativity, individual innovation, confidence or increased language competence (Liu, 1988).

Teachers are encouraged to use authentic materials that are available - radio broadcasts, original dialogues, and current readings - instead of the textbook alone. Teachers lack the creativity to design original materials, do not feel at liberty to alter existing materials, and fear criticism from peers and superiors should such efforts be unsuccessful or deviate from norms set by government approved curriculum (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Penner, 1995). Those students who "have to communicate, to learn about other cultures ... to speak, to talk, to listen to radio - it seems our curriculum does not attend to these students' needs," Ai Ci said.

Examinations

Teachers are held accountable for student success on their examinations. The current curriculum, texts provided and exam-focused teaching practice more than adequately meet students' most basic need, to pass their exams. Content evaluated on examinations, and therefore emphasized by teachers, has the greatest validity in classroom practice. Teachers whose students consistently fail to pass their English exams may, like the "Russian re-treads", be sent to isolated placements and institutes of lesser status.

Farr is of the opinion that revolutionary change to support materials such as audio-tapes and textbooks must precede motivation of passively oriented teachers toward innovative practice. This is not a simple matter. As Ai Ci pointed out:

> Like if you try to teach students to listen and to speak, probably the majority of our teachers cannot do that. So it is not feasible to do that. And it is also not feasible to invite many, many foreigners to teach because funding is limited. If we wish to have Examinations on listening and speaking, China is so big, it would not be feasible to carry out such an examination. To examine these, listening tape recorders would be necessary.
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> To examine speaking, you have to have someone who can talk to the students. Then, how do you evaluate that, how do you attribute to their performance a concrete number. Those things are very hard.

Although a great deal is expected of Chinese teachers as intellectuals in Confucian ideology, their education and cultural values do not permit them to meet those high expectations. That may help to explain why, though the rhetoric gives them high status, their remuneration gives them poverty. They are not rewarded for what they do not, and cannot do because of the interaction of their socio-cultural history and existential reality. Though teachers have extensive content area knowledge of linguistic structures or literary form, they perceive themselves as lacking sufficient competence to teach in English, have little awareness of recent developments in language education research, and are thus not able to be eclectic in their experimentation or application of those methods.

Insights Gained

Teacher qualities, competencies, and practice in language education form the contextual basis of students' expectations of teachers. Students' expectations of Chinese language teachers define their expectations for teacher role in the FE's classroom as well.

Application of incorrect assumptions impacts students' internalized experience of L2, the relationship student and FE have and the nature of learnings that take place. Teacher character, pedagogic and L2 competence and delivery of language education are important factors to consider when analyzing who teachers are and what they do for and with students.

Students apply assumptions that language education in classes taught by foreigners will be little different from that offered by their Chinese language teachers (Lortie, 1975; Ma, 1992). Expectations about language learning are fulfilled in the Chinese teacher's classroom. When students transfer their assumptions about what is "natural" and universal about language education to the expatriate's classroom they may become confused and resistant, finding a level of conflict between the two sets for learning with which they cannot cope (Chow, 1993; Richards, 1986; Smith, 1994; Ting, 1987; Widdowson, 1990).

Students are duty bound to grant all teachers a high level of respect, and do not allow themselves to actively question Chinese teachers, teaching methods or delivery of lessons. Teachers are expected to be benevolent dictators who are respected, unquestioningly obeyed and revered as intellectuals.

Students accept that college instructors' will have at least a Bachelor's degree. That degree is expected to have provided teachers with the masterful knowledge in their content area needed to pass their exams. Strong content area knowledge alone does not provide a sufficient base for teachers to meet student need for spoken competency. Most teachers do not access recent research in a process of self-education. Thus they have only cognitive definitions of communicative teaching methods to guide them. Perhaps more important than possessing advanced competency themselves is the confidence to use existing competence in the classroom. Students look to FE to provide them with their needs for L2 communicative competency (Zhang, 1995).

Students transfer their expectations of Chinese teachers to foreign experts, with one notable exception. Students are aware of foreign teachers' native language competency. Language is viewed as a set of rules and habits to be acquired (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Field, 1984; Liu, 1988; Ting, 1987). Teachers' duty is the transmission of knowledge. Therefore, as Zhi Hui noted, students are disappointed when foreign experts fail to fulfill the hopes and expectations imbued upon them, that they will transmit their language competency.

First-order education policy changes creating pressure to implement CLT significantly impact only tertiary education. Teachers find it difficult, if not impossible, to implement

new Western teaching methodologies (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). Despite rhetorical support for a more constructivist, problem-posing model of education delivery, a traditional approach dominates practice (Paine, 1990). Teachers do not possess the diversity of teaching strategies which could facilitate their ability to provide students with exposure to communicative teaching in its stronger form. They themselves have not been exposed to such strategies and do not access recent research available in the field (Hui, 1997; Richards, 1986).

Circumstances beyond teacher control, exams, syllabi and cultural values, constrain teacher ability to implement CLT. Unless teachers can learn to teach by alternative methods for achievement on alternatively structured examinations, there is little incentive to adapt foreign ways. Little awareness exists as to the implications of those methods for application in classroom contexts since teachers themselves may have had minimal exposure to them (Hui, 1997). Communicative teaching innovation that exists is certainly language use in its weaker form, focused on learning to use English forms as opposed to using the language itself as a way of acquiring its systems to extend personal or student competency (Richards, 1986; White, 1989).

Researchers like Penner (1995) and Li (1984) agree with Farr that a revolution in the examination system in this top-down educational system is prerequisite to wide acceptance or practice of radical changes in teaching strategies and support materials. Only continued changes to the evaluation and examination system which currently subverts effective language teaching will facilitate curriculum intentions to teach for purposes of active communication (Penner, 1995).

Students expect that as native speakers of the language, Foreign "Experts" know everything about it, its linguistic rules and grammatical structures. If they are dutiful that knowledge will be given to students. Teachers who have such knowledge are assured of student respect.

Foreign Expert Expectations of Self

When transferred abroad socio-cultural beliefs play a more significant role in our existential reality than might be usual. While abroad, we encounter conflict and inconsistencies that are we are not conscious of at home. My developing awareness of the differences and similarities between Chinese students' expectations of me and my own expectations of myself has helped me come to a better understanding of the relationship we can share. Those expectations are not consistent (Stern, 1992).

In Canada, would-be expatriates' expectations of self in language education are an interaction, as Clandinin and Connelly say, of socio-cultural history and existential reality (1994). When one goes abroad to teach one experiences some degree of culture shock (Brown, 1986; Oxford, 1994). After the excitement and then the anger at distressing differences about new surroundings pass, one may develop empathy and some ability to reconcile differences.

Finally, travelers either experience crisis or adapt to cultural differences. At this stage, one may experience "a profound cross-cultural learning experience" leading to heightened self-awareness and personal growth" (Brown, 1986, p. 38). One examines the influence one's own culture has had and the cultural derivation of other people's values, attitudes and beliefs. For me, during the course of the year I was in China, I developed empathy with and tolerance for many Chinese ways. I saved the profundity of developing self-awareness and personal growth to apply in this research process.

I have tried to bring my socio-cultural history, my beliefs and values, into consciousness as I compare them with Chinese beliefs. In this section of the paper I address the socio-cultural factors influencing foreign experts' teaching experience. I begin with personal characteristics, then look at what constitutes pedagogic competence. Finally, I look at differences and similarities in delivery of language education in Canada and China.

Character

In Canada, too, teachers are people of high moral character who care deeply about their students. It is the particulars of how we demonstrate that character and caring as we carry out our professional roles that are at variance with the expectations students have of us. Our culture certainly values individual creativ[redacted] critique as we constantly quest for change and innovation. Perhaps it is that search for change that takes us to FL teaching placements.

We go abroad partially motivated by humanitarian goals, but also for selfish reasons. We go to do research, satisfy personal curiosity, or in search of professional challenges and cultural exchanges that broaden our experience (Stern, 1983). We function as models of native speaker competence, cultural, educational and materials resources. Jasmine, Farr and I each left behind teaching materials we had taken with us, hoping they would be used to supplement those that exist (Burnaby & Sun, 1989).

FEs in this study extended those functions, including the belief that we served also as role models of Western teaching techniques and strategies. FEs are hired at great expense so Farr was surprised because he

> thought they would be much more receptive to a different kind of approach than turned out to be the case. This was a failure on my part, to take enough time to find out about their expectations, and hopes and aspirations from this course.
>
> It was my belief that they had brought me all the way from Canada, and so they would be ready to accept the way that I planned to work with them. That just was not the case, and at maybe halfway through the year some of the students came to see me.

As we develop a comfort level and trust for each other, teachers try to respond to student expressions of their frustrations and needs (Field, 1984). Wide disparity of our preferred teaching methods, materials and approaches foreigners bring and the requirements of their exams. They prefer that their Chinese cultural identity and context continue to determine methodological and strategic appropriateness (Penner, 1995). Jasmine's expectation that students will have fun in their learning, be able to participate in discussion and write informally in class is unfounded given students' prior educational experience (Swain & Miccoli, 1994; Ting, 1987). Lacking either the eclecticism gained through experience or education in inter-cultural comparative education, too often our students feel they are being asked to deny cultural aspects of their being rather than to bridge that space with additional ways of knowing reality (Byram et al., 1994; Fox, 1994).

Pedagogic Competence

The teacher recruitment policy of the Foreign Experts Bureau in Beijing was concisely articulated by Alan Maley (1986) in "Xanadu - 'A miracle of rare device': the teaching of English in China" and seems unchanged. "If it walks, and talks English, and has [a B.Ed], an M.A. or Ph.D., it's O.K." The only requirements are native speaker expertise and a Bachelor's Degree. Preferentially hired "retired high-school or university teachers of any subject area" (Maley, 1986), though able to be eclectic in selecting methods and teaching strategies, lack knowledge of either or "what" and "how" to teach the content. These older teachers may be even more embedded in C1 schema and more likely to take an impositional stance to change.

But younger B.Ed.s who possess theoretical background lack the experience to be eclectic in selecting, designing and implementing curriculum. Although Farr and Jasmine were experienced teacher educators, this is not commonly the case (Maley,

1986). I had no teacher training experience. My formal education in ESL curriculum and instruction was dated; neither Jasmine nor Farr had any. Currently, Foreign "Experts" seldom simultaneously possess all necessary qualifications - broad and deep subject area content knowledge, pedagogy for teacher training, and teaching experience.

Despite policy rhetoric supportive of communicative teaching, China continues to hire under-qualified people as teachers of English in their post-secondary institutions. Those whose content area is related to English language or education would be placed in FL Departments where they will teach English language majors. Those who hold a bachelor's degree in education might be expected to teach either or both English language majors and/or science students. Those who hold a science degree would teach English at other institutions where the content focus is related to science. These minimal requirements are reflective of a fundamental belief in the value of content knowledge as basic teacher qualification and incorrectly transferred assumptions regarding English language content knowledge taught to and possessed by native speakers.

Additional factors contributing to the problem of unqualified foreign teacher personnel are inadequate recruitment procedures, inability to pay in accordance with Western remunerative standards (Maley, 1986) and lack of availability of personnel who possess the requisite combination of content knowledge, current educational theory and pedagogical content knowledge.

Very little guidance is forthcoming from administrators at educational institutes who answered curriculum questions with platitudes. Thus I, like the majority of teachers hired, was grossly under-qualified by Canadian standards to do teacher training (Maley, 1986). Although no explicit expectations of me were stated, I came to view myself as a sort of cultural informant and liaison officer. Despite my lack of teacher training experience, I could model native speaker competence and my culture's way of delivering education, alternative teaching strategies, cultural beliefs and values. I resolved to do my best to meet the implied expectation of me as a literary "scholar". I would just need to borrow the books from the library and read very fast! As you've read, it wasn't quite that easy.

Delivery of Language Education in Canada

Canadian teachers and our employers expect a high level of teacher autonomy and creativity in curriculum design and implementation. For us, curriculum consists of a set of minimal guidelines to be fulfilled (Alberta Curriculum Branch, 1987). How those

guidelines are met and the materials, teaching methods and student activities used are a matter of teacher discretion and design. Though there may have been a time in Canada when teachers were expected to know it all and transmit it to students, that time is gone now. Instead, our current priority is providing students with the skills to process and critique the plethora of information with which they are bombarded. We now think of ourselves as partners in a learning process.

In Canada, therefore, in teaching junior high language arts and media processing skills for kindergarten to grade 9 students, I viewed my role as a facilitator of learning rather than as a transmitter of knowledge. Generally, I related with students in an egalitarian way that would help them develop creative and critical thinking skills. I helped them formulate the questions that lead them in a search for the knowledge they needed to meet cooperatively or collaboratively set learning goals. I often dictated study of specific curriculum content and/or product as dictated by education policy in the Junior high language arts curriculum guide (1987).

The path students chose to follow as they journeyed was one of their own choosing. There was no complete set of content to be covered. I used my discretion in determining the sequence of steps I would follow as I guided students. In language arts education, a set of textbooks was provided, selected because it met basic curriculum guidelines. However, there was no explicit requirement that I follow the text, providing I met basic curriculum requirements. Canadian students are imbued with personal responsibility to work cooperatively with teacher and peers in formulating learning goals. They are encouraged to be self-directed and autonomous in striving to achieve those goals (Murray, 1994).

Delivery of Language Education in China

In China, FEs are commonly assigned to teach courses seen to require more active language processing - Pronunciation and Intonation (P&I), English Language Conversation, Western Cultures, English Literature and Extensive Reading as well as other courses one might volunteer to design and teach. Administrators use their discretion in deciding whether or not to supply the textbooks available for all courses to foreigners. Jasmine shared my experience of being supplied with only some of the "required" texts for courses. The issue text provided for Western Cultures was soon dispensed with since Jasmine found it contained obsolete and inaccurate information, in addition to being colourless and unmotivating (Ford, 1988). I received texts for literature, but not for P&I or Conversation. I was told explicitly, when I asked, that I was expected to follow the literature text, but no comment or guidance of any sort was

provided for other courses. Clearly, I was expected to design a syllabus and content for those courses.

In a class of 28 students I recognized I could provide little opportunity for students to interact directly with me in class. Therefore, I viewed it as my responsibility to design a curriculum and provide content that optimized opportunities for student's active English language use. Further, in the context of brief introductory exchanges with students I interpreted their reaction to me as indicating that they found me a threat in some way. In fact, Zhi Hui indicated he felt intimidated by the very language competency he sought. Ai Ci said that students are often suspicious of foreigner motivations, expecting that they may be the unwitting subjects of some research project. From the outset I preferred minimally structured lessons that were product oriented. As described in "The Chinese way" I learned that students responded positively to this strategy.

Lesson Structure.

Lesson delivery techniques I used were, by and large, the same as I had used at home. Since I had no knowledge of either the TOEFL exam or the Band Exams students were obsessed about, I did not concern myself with teaching language structure and form except insofar as it related directly to my assignments or students' direct questions (which were usually raised outside class). Like Jasmine, it was my view that my Chinese colleagues' linguistic expertise was far greater than mine, despite my four university linguistics courses. Further, I was not accountable, as they were, for student achievement on these exams. Rather, I focused my energies on language use as a process of communal discovery, assimilation and synthesis, viewing that perspective as a more valid pursuit for me (Penner, 1995). I expected students to do some group work, and provided explicit teaching regarding my perspective of what that process involved. I also required students to do homework, and written assignments. At their request, I made available "worksheets" as "enrichment" exercises.

Lessons were structured, albeit according to my way of thinking. I commonly referred students to the focus of the preceding lesson, provided rationale and focus task for the current day's work and related it to previous learning. In class work time was provided and generally either carried over to homework, or a separate but related homework assignment was assigned as follow-up. When marking of assignments was necessary, they were often assessed or evaluated by students according to mutually set and agreed upon criteria (White, 1989). Though this was a process students regarded as most unusual, they enjoyed the task and were judicious in their work. I felt I had considerable

expertise to teach information processing skills and strove to provide activities that required application of abstract learning strategies (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993).

For as much interaction as I could facilitate, I often reminded students that I could not give them my competency. I tried to maximize *their* opportunities to use the language, and encouraged them to do so at every turn. But I acknowledged repeatedly that only with use would come competency. It was my view that basically all I could provide was vicarious access to C2 experience through interactions with me, and L2 competency through use, hoping all the while that students would gain, in Farr's words "a sense of the language" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). I learned to draw on student values of group solidarity and conformity to assist them in attaining a degree of autonomy in their learning (Murray, 1994; White, 1989). Perhaps my implicit and inductive teaching strategies would have been more effective had I reversed the structure, teaching explicitly and deductively (Ehrman, 1990; Hui, 1997). I tried to design most of my lessons so that students applied abstract learning strategies, either transferred from L1, or learned anew for L2 (Field, 1984; Oxford, 1994; Tyacke, 1991). On the other hand, it is possible, that my implicit inductive teaching style facilitated increased language use as students communicated together in their work pairs and small groups for authentic purposes of meaning negotiation and interpretation. Students may implicitly have worked to transfer preferred concrete learning strategies as they attempted to acquire the less accessible abstract strategies required for task completion (Liu, 1988; Ma, 1992).

The approaches Farr, Jasmine and I took to meeting student need and/or desire for international cultural awareness varied. Farr addressed primarily surface knowledge and found that students displayed little interest in the geography, economic or political structures of other countries (Byram, 1991). On the other hand, I found they took a very active role in discovering the light and the dark sides of intercultural differences (Oxford, 1994). Students analyzed and participated in story telling based on cultural content from tape recorded news broadcasts, related in their texts or depicted among the great lot of calendar pictures I took with me. Jasmine, who taught teachers upgrading their education, ensured access to recent pedagogical research in language education, bringing about a level of awareness of the local existence of materials previously unknown (Liu, 1988).

Thinking back on my teaching style, I mentioned to Ai Ci that sometimes I would go into class with a basic idea of where I wanted the lesson to go. But I did not have a detailed and itemized sequence of concepts I would present let alone a memorized lecture. It would be my intention to elicit interests from students and let that guide me. I wondered what their perception of that strategy might be. Ai Ci's response was:

> I think most of the students would regard you as ill-prepared because when we study in middle school the teachers have everything prepared. They may not prepare it but they would have it written on their book and from reference books and things like that. They would say first, we are going to learn this and second, third and finally we are going to review it. And so there is a structure there, also at university it is the same.
>
> Such a new kind of teaching style is very difficult for the students to adjust. They have to change paradigms, from the one they are familiar with to this new one. Usually they would not regard this as learning.

While admittedly many lessons I would teach would follow a consistent structure, specifics of that structure varied depending upon the activity and that day's communicative focus. For me a plan was just that, not a dictum. Instead, I looked forward to opportunities for emergent and extemporaneous teaching opportunities resulting from student demonstrated interest.

I had no systematically thought out schematically structured syllabus, nor even clearly articulated goals in mind (Oxford, 1994; Widdowson, 1990). Yet in my own way, relying only on textbooks by (Breen & Candlin, 1988) and (Richard-Amato, 1988) and current issues of *English Teaching Forum*, I intuitively considered Stern's four syllabi for communicative language teaching (Stern, 1992). I rejected addressing the language syllabus in any depth since I believed I was not the best person for that job. I integrated the remaining three focus areas, learning strategies, cultural values and experiential awareness, in the course of teaching curriculum content I changed or designed autonomously. In a process of trial and error, I discovered strategies that worked and did not work as I formulated personal grounded theory in praxis (Byram et al., 1994).

Insights Gained

I now better understand certain differences and similarities between student expectations of me and expectations I had of myself for teaching them. I address personal character and pedagogic competence only very briefly. Delivery of language education is covered in greater detail under out-of-class interactions and innovative teaching practice.

Character and Pedagogic Competence

Personal characteristics and official professional qualifications can be addressed very briefly because they are similar. FEs and Chinese teachers alike are expected to be people of high moral fibre. Consistent with the literature and the views of Chinese

nationals, I too view my role as a "substitute parent". I provided guidance and liaison, and occasionally resorted to my status as an authority figure. In such cases I provided any extra help students needed, but, like Jasmine, required that certain tasks be fulfilled in certain ways. Both Chinese and Canadian teachers care deeply and work hard to meet student needs.

However, it is the specifics of ways we demonstrate our caring for students and the expectations of our university degrees that vary. As regards caring and parenting, the Canadian teacher is more likely to question the student to determine whether s/he has the means by which to achieve a given goal or solve a particular problem. The Chinese teacher is more likely to provide direction. In cold classrooms I provided opportunities for "bend and stretch" exercises to warm the cockles. To my knowledge, I was the only teacher at First Branch who took, and gave, students a 10-minute break half way through the class. Chinese teachers used that time to formal education benefit.

Our ability or method of helping students varies from those of Chinese. Sometimes students asked me for personal advice. Advice I gave often surprised its recipient, despite my cautions of intercultural difference. On several occasions, students asked me for help with applications to Canadian universities, and once for help to emigrate. I perceived that students felt that since *I* could freely travel the world, I must have powerful political connections. They assumed that, if I chose to, I could help them. I recall the look of distrust on one girl's face when I said I would help her to apply to emigrate, but really had *no* influence. Both Chinese college teachers and Canadians are required to hold a Bachelor's Degree at minimum. The primary focus of Chinese teacher training programs, past and present, emphasize content area knowledge. Canadian teacher education focuses first on pedagogic concerns, subject area content second, and awareness of related content areas third.

My education degree provided a variety of courses in pedagogic theory and practice, as well as content area expertise. I had access to several options in a program which, in at least a significant way, allowed me to autonomously select courses of interest and potential benefit to me. Whereas virtually the entire focus for Chinese teachers is in the content area, excepting required courses in political education. I had two practica experiences. During them, I was required to be progressively self-directed in my practice. Thus, it would appear that content area knowledge is of more vital concern to Chinese than to Canadian education culture.

Chinese employers take the language competency of native speakers for granted. Unlike my students, I did *not* assume that *my* fluency would make *them* better teachers (Penner, 1995). In fact I considered it virtually irrelevant. Instead, I think if Chinese put

to use their basic L2 competency in daily practice, that competency level would increase (Swain, 1993). Rather, I viewed my expertise through my role as cultural informant and liaison. I felt my ability to provide access to a variety of learning strategies and teaching methods was of much greater importance to their education as teachers (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Widdowson, 1990).

Out-of-class interactions

For FEs in China there is a dearth of formal or institutionalized channels for collegial interactions. However, outside the confines of the classroom many opportunities for informal interactions exist. These extracurricular activities, organized either by students or the FE, serve multiple functions. Organized by students as opportunities for English language practice, they are among rare opportunities for casual expatriate human interaction (Maley, 1986). They provide opportunities for students to read and hear contemporary FL materials and have native speaker interactions in a non-judgmental atmosphere - opportunities not otherwise readily available (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). Ai Ci viewed them as opportunities for students to observe the foreign teacher and determine whether his/her caring for students is sincere. These interactions then, may be instrumental in facilitating transfer of an informalized atmosphere in class. The warm, informal interpersonal interactions with students out of class assist the teacher in engendering the same ambiance in class to facilitate student tolerance for error in the active use of language (Ting, 1987). Jasmine said that such interactions provided invaluable access in an informal atmosphere to information she used in preparing lessons and evaluating her practice. Socially and professionally isolated (Maley, 1986), FEs are generally happy to accept student invitations to attend English language extra-curricular activities, to invite groups of students into their homes for "open house" conversations, or go on outings with students.

Innovative Teaching Practice

Basic tenets of CLT reflect its source in our socio-cultural values. Many of its Western assumptions about the language education context do not transfer to China (Widdowson, 1990). Western conceptions of CLT view teacher and student roles very differently from the Chinese way. We view students as participants in a community of learners in which teacher leads and facilitates group process (Breen & Candlin, 1988; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; LeBlanc, 1990; Penner, 1995; Richard-Amato, 1988; Stern, 1983). Our expectation of community and egalitarianism between teacher and student is alien for students accustomed to authoritarian teacher practice. It is difficult for students to displace the contradiction they see between teacher as authority and teacher as

egalitarian partner. Nonetheless, they view this value as a positive and desirable one stereotypical of Westerners (Byram et al., 1994). The ambiance of passive, quiet obedience students expected to acquiesce to was not one I found conducive to a positive learning environment or a sense of community. On the other hand, my lack of cross-cultural awareness and praxis background in CLT left me unskilled at consistently engendering a collaborative spirit of community.

A significant part of the Canadian ESL teacher's role is facilitation of authentic communicative purpose in L2 through access to a wide variety of realistic simulations and independent student activities in group discussions, role plays and the like. Ample access to teaching and learning resources of all kinds including print, media, realia, access to native speakers, etc. is assumed to exist. In China, as in many EFL settings, access to authentic resources is available only to the creative teacher who can imagine communicative applications for the few authentic resources available. Most often authentic resources cannot be "created"; only opportunities for and activities that use the resources that are available can be manipulated (Byram, 1991). It was my experience that only classical and contemporary literature in English by acknowledged "great authors of our time" and pirate copies of "bad movies" were available. The Canadian Embassy lent its video collection, but these resources will not be available when students become teachers. Even at that time, prior to implementation of GATT regulations regarding copyright, books were sufficiently expensive that only foreign expert teachers could afford to purchase them.

While many students are independently self-directed in their learning, they are not creative or autonomous decision-makers. Adult students are sufficiently socialized that many creative skills essential to communicative language learning have long since fallen by the wayside (Ting, 1987, p.60). Our expectation that errors of language use and usage as students spontaneously and actively and creative linguistic output transgress traditional teacher/student roles. The idea of negotiated interpretive meaning where, as Jasmine and I expected, students would laugh and have fun, is foreign when texts of all sorts are deemed to have inherent meaning interpretable only by the "masters" in one correct way. The traditional teacher-student relationship makes it difficult for students to "suspend their disbelief" and actively participate in simulated activities (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Byram et al., 1991; Louw, 1989).

Non-analytic, inductive or loosely structured teaching requires a paradigm shift for students. Activities implemented for their inherent interest will most likely be deemed a waste of time and thus, inappropriate to the context of formal education (Penner, 1995). Only explicit preparation, provision of clear rationale and defined expectations enable students to cope with gaps of expectation that value independent, inquisitive learner

interaction with authentic situationally prescribed communication in the target language (Li, 1984; Ting, 1987). Without this kind of preparation students are unable to cope with paradigmatic change. It is all too likely they would become mired in a confused quandary, the subjects of foreign teachers whose cultural values are inconsistent, even contradictory to their own. Their only recourse may be a political one of resistance, rejection or construction of a resistant counter-culture - costs to be avoided (Smith, 1994; Widdowson, 1990).

CLT, as we conceive and practice it in the West, is inapplicable to the Chinese context regardless of whether it may "serve[s] the needs of society in a more direct and practical way" (Ting, 1987, p.60). A caring teacher in China or Canada ensures that students are confident they are being instructed effectively. Inherent in one's ability to provide effective instruction is meeting culturally essential student expectations "in conception[s] of what role the teacher should play" (Stern, 1992, p. 25). Teachers need to adapt to meet cultural requirements for guidance, structure and clearly defined learning product.

Therefore, a FE in China needs to act as a beneficent *authority* (as opposed to a dictator) to provide student access to and use of existing and potential creative abilities in the design of communicative activities which exploit available resources. S/he needs to establish, reactivate and facilitate transfer of abstract learning strategies from L1 for application to L2 acquisition and teaching practice. Students then need to have opportunities in class to experiment with implementing their ideas in practice teaching situations (Zhang, 1995). In a classroom atmosphere that is supportive of experimentation students can gain exposure to creative original communicative L2 teaching intents (Hui, 1997; Ma, 1992; Newman, 1987; Richards, 1986). In our role as cultural liaisons who provide active participation in alternative teaching and learning methods we must be very sensitive about transferring cultural value positions.

Unfortunately, I incorrectly applied my socio-cultural assumptions about my own and the roles of students' while in China. As a result I embarrassed myself on several occasions. In Canada, the unpredictability that accompanies the freedom to experiment creatively in class with original teaching resources and activities is protected because one has the security of an egalitarian learning partnership with students. The occasional embarrassment that can result from experimentation is not usually sufficient to preclude the practice. Although some incorrectly applied assumptions have no significant adverse overall effect, others can be traumatic for students, teacher and the language education context in general (Oxford, 1994). In China, the loss of face that may result has much more serious consequences. Responding to situations involving the issue of "face" in constructive ways that facilitate education and language acquisition require sensitivity and critical awareness of self in both cultures.

It is the very lack of predictability that led me to explore cultural conflicts that arose in the microcosm of my classroom in China, conflicts resulting from different expectations about roles and appropriate classroom teacher/student relationships (McKay, 1992). The elation I was feeling with students' willingness to take initiatives in expressing original thought may have lead me to over-confidently transfer the following previously successful lesson to their cultural context.

Chapter V Foreign Expert and Student Relationship

I hope that telling the story which follows will demonstrate the affect upon my ability to provide effective instruction that incorrect cultural assumptions regarding appropriate interactions in in-class student and teacher relationship had. I continue to suffer considerable embarrassment whenever I think about the teaching incident which follows, and hesitate to tell it now. Some ten years' teaching experience in Canada as a junior high language arts and ESL teacher had provided me with much tacit knowledge and an intuitive sense in my Canadian classrooms. Although my past years of teaching enabled me to experience many successes in China too, I had not imposed upon myself engagement in reflective "systematic self-critical analysis" (Newman, 1987) that permitted me to see my teaching from the perspective of my students.

Without undergoing that process of self-analysis and reflection, I would have remained oblivious of implicit intentions, unconscious effects and alternative interpretations of many of my actions. I had never before addressed the impact of deep-rooted cultural values about what constitute knowledge and learning, how important familiar lesson structures and learning strategies, or tendencies to favour inductive or deductive methods of information analysis are when new situations are faced. Nor had I previously realized the trauma I created for students when I required that they separate themselves physically and mentally from their group. When I did those things I now know that I obviated cultural norms requiring passivity and the ability to keep face. I addressed some explicit questions that arose through that experience. What is the difference between the Chinese concept of loss of face and Western embarrassment? What are the consequences of losing face? What mistakes are forgivable, resulting only in a twitter, exchanged glances, a tolerant smile? What sorts of interactions result in student being too busy to help out as they had before? This reflective process has provided me with an opportunity to achieve the self-awareness and depth of cultural exchange implied by this final state of culture shock (Brown, 1986).

When I initially went about the task of writing the following story, I attempted to do so in detail, but without judgment, criticism or interpretation. It was a constant struggle as I failed to see the point of expending the effort to think the thing through and write it down without these objectives at the forefront. But in retrospect I find that such a description was prerequisite to opening up the whole experience, permitting me to see hidden content and contexts in my teacher practice, to perceive meanings in alternative ways, to be more insightful of emerging patterns (Clandinin, 1994; Schön, 1991). Anything less would have left significant aspects of it closed, isolated from analysis. Furthermore, those reading or hearing the description are empowered now to inscribe their own meanings to perform their own analysis of the described event, less bound by my selectivity (Denzin, 1994; Lather, 1991).

"Peanut butter: Sticking it together" and reflections upon that experience, interspersed throughout as well as following it, illuminate the contradictions in role expectations of the FE vs. and those of Chinese students in their in-class relationships. The roles we see for ourselves and those students have of us as EFL teachers, when separated by wide gaps, can have dire consequences for future interactions and relationships.

This narrative describes my experience of using a typical Canadian cultural experience and total physical response (TPR) methodology to teach functional language (Richard-Amato, 1988). This foray into communicative teaching of daily experiences of Western life was most informative in formulating thoughts relative to the applicability of Western conceptions of CLT in a cultural context like China. I taught the same group of 28 third year Bachelor of English degree teacher trainees both English Literature and P&I. It was in the context of the latter that I suffered a traumatic (non)-professional experience just as I concluded the poetry section with them in the Literature course early in February. I would soon feel very much the outsider, a teacher whose expectations did not jive with those of my students (Maley, 1986).

I usually took a small snack with me to class and ate it at our mid-class break. In hallway conversations several students had expressed curiosity about the kinds of things Canadians eat between meals. One day I committed a *grand faux pas* in deciding to let my class help me prepare my mid-morning snack. This lesson "gone bad" exemplifies the potential impact of interactions between contradictory expectations of existential realities and socio-cultural history. In closing reflections upon that experience, and from insights gained, I attempt to understand how my students internalized the lesson, to relive my own feelings and identify impacts that, in other circumstances, should have been predictable. What went wrong with a lesson that had been very successful in previous practice? How was I misguided by my assumptions? How did students view the lesson? What impact did it have for our relationships?

Peanut butter: Sticking it together

I was at a loss for something motivating to do in my Pronunciation and Intonation class. At home it would have become Friday afternoon at the movie. In China, my class and I had just concluded a series of rather tedious listening comprehension lessons in the language laboratory. In that unit students had just written a test to evaluate their ability to ascertain pertinent details from Voice of America *newscast excerpts I had recorded weekly. It was our last week of classes before the major three-week annual holiday, and I expected my students shared my desire for a diversion.*

In a flash of creative inspiration I remembered a great lesson on giving instructions I had had as a junior high student. I had used it successfully in teaching junior high language arts as well as with immigrant Vietnamese senior citizens in Canada. It had always been great fun, and my students had always enjoyed my clowning, laughing gleefully at me. In this context I felt students would use the opportunity to integrate and apply newfound language competencies they were exploiting daily in this course as well as in Literature. They were gaining tolerance for what they did not know as they searched situational context for meaning, listening for specific information and predicting. Overall, I was feeling very much encouraged by their positive response to me as they tried hard to express their own thoughts and use their language in new ways.

I expected it would be an excellent communicative lesson in this context as well. I planned it as an introduction to a one-week mini-unit on functional language. With a classmate, students would practice giving, receiving and following instructions for a simple, everyday task in an authenticated context typical of total physical response ESL methodology (Brick, 1991; Richard-Amato, 1988; Richards, 1986). The day's lesson would begin with instructions for making a peanut butter sandwich, an ordinary experience for Westerners. A slightly more oily variety of peanut butter than ours can be purchased even in corner stores. Bread, albeit a sweetened variety, is available in pre-sliced loaves in the big state-owned department stores. It was not hidden away in Friendship Stores for foreigners, so I expect it was used by Chinese too. But Chinese people do not eat sandwiches as we know them.

My students were fairly at ease with me and I looked forward with great excitement to being able to acquaint them with an aspect of my culture in an authentic, active, participatory way that would validate their curiosity about anything "Western". That fateful morning, into a grocery bag I packed a loaf of sweet white bread in its plastic bag,

a jar of peanut butter, a table knife, and off I went to class, breathlessly anticipating an invigorating and revitalizing lesson.

I love teaching for these exhilarating moments, the highs brought on by a moment's inspiration. I waited for the perfect moment and made a theatrical entrance, greeting my primly seated students in their paired desks, boys at the back of the room, girls at the front. It was ten o'clock and we could hear the late morning sounds wafting in as the class quickly quieted in my presence. The fresh morning breeze blew in through broken window panes and the calls of street sellers and vehicle horns pierced the air.

I announced that this morning we would be using the function of giving instructions. We discussed the need to provide the listener with methodical, precise, sequential statements. We discussed the need for a positive attitude that would encourage the listener to listen and think carefully, yet feel encouraged. We talked about how, in giving instructions, one must be willing to be wrong, backtrack, review and restate. Well, actually, I talked. They listened. Quietly, attentively, anticipating. As I talked I made myself a peanut butter sandwich -- and ate it.

Things were going well. The students clearly thought I had missed my breakfast, and were somewhat dismayed at my nonchalant behavior. Without further adieu, I packed up the groceries into the carry bag, and asked the class as a whole what I had just done. I had lectured. Yes, feeling a little guilty, I admitted I had. I had informed them about the structures and content of giving instructions. Yes, I had. And what else? Yes, I'd made myself a sandwich. Ah, they had the content schema! Wonderful.

Now. Time for the blockbuster. "But I'm still hungry," I announced. "I'd like to have another sandwich. Would one of you tell me how to make it?" My students had just watched me make and consume a sandwich. They seemed very subdued, very hesitant. I encouraged them. That it is difficult to give methodical, sequential, precise directions in even a simple task was precisely the point of the lesson. I was not at all worried that this important facet of the lesson would be learned and appreciated.

I was not surprised that no one volunteered to tell me, their teacher, what to do. So I called on the most confident student, a competent English speaker, the Communist Party Student Liaison, my Chinese tutor, someone used to instructing me. We had a rapport with each other. I knew she would not let me down. "Xiao Hong, would you please tell me how to make myself a peanut butter sandwich?" She was not keen, but she agreed, and came forward with her air of surety. The students looked on, now quite bewildered, as I proceeded to blindfold myself.

"Well," she started, "I think perhaps you must first take the bread out of the bag." I groped in the direction of the grocery bag, and drew it toward me. Feeling for the plastic within, I lifted the bag of bread out of the main bag. I placed the bread bag on the desk, and unceremoniously but dramatically, ripped open the inner bag. The whole loaf fell onto the bare wood of the desk. I felt Xiao Hong pause, unsure how to continue. But, nonplussed, as a dutiful teacher I was non-judgmental in encouraging her to proceed.

"Now, Ms. Masur," she said, forgetting her manners under stress, "get the knife out of the bag." I rejected the impulse to correct her omitted "please. I felt all around the bread on the desk and the remnants of the bread bag, but there was no knife. Feigning a puzzled look, I asked for further directions. Xiao Hong was catching on now and respectfully asked me to search in the grocery bag for the knife. I reached for the bag and knocked the whole bag to the floor, apparently by accident. The speed with which she picked up the bag and returned it to the desk for me made it clear she was helping me to save face for having made a clumsy mistake. I made a mental note to let her know I was appreciative.

In the next set of instructions, she was more explicit in asking me to carefully search the desktop for the bag and find the opening in it, to place my hand in the bag and retrieve the peanut butter jar. She regained her poise as I sensibly got the jar from the bag, and lifted it out. "Next, Miss Masur, please, I would suggest that you should take the knife out of the bag." I reached into the bag and removed the knife, holding it by the blade. "Now, I believe it is time to take the lid off the peanut butter." I felt relieved that Miss Hong was beginning to regain her confidence.

Holding the jar in one hand, the knife blade in the other, I jiggled the jar up and down in an effort to have the jar drop out from under the lid. That didn't work, so I held the jar in my left hand, the lid and the knife blade in my right. I pulled at the lid, I turned it clockwise, tightening it. Realizing her error, Xiao Hong asked me to put the knife down, and twist the lid from the jar in an anti-clockwise direction. Ah-ha! The lid came away.

"Now, take some peanut butter out of the jar." I reached into the jar with my index finger and scooped out some peanut butter. Aghast, Xiao Hong faltered. The class was silent. You could have heard a pin drop.

I could feel her fighting yet again to compose herself as she instructed me to use the knife to remove some peanut butter from the jar. I picked up the knife, again by the blade, dipped the handle into the peanut butter and scooped out a gob of peanut butter. "Now, spread the peanut butter onto the bread." Giving the poor student a little credit, I did not follow her instructions precisely but rather picked up one slice of bread and used

the knife to spread the peanut butter onto it. "Take another slice of bread and place it on top of the one with the peanut butter on it." I did that, placing the second slice, askew, atop the one lathered in brown, sticky goop.

"Now, Miss Masur, you are finished." I removed the blindfold, and with a sigh of relief, took a much needed bite of the sullied sandwich. The class looked on in utter disbelief, some gasping audibly. I most certainly was finished! Xiao Hong turned, stone faced, and returned to her seat where she slumped, mortified, to stare a hole in her neatly folded hands.

Insensitive to Xiao Hong's body language and the powerful general silence, I continued the lesson as I had taught it in the past. I asked students to draw from a hat one of a number of simple tasks to instruct a classmate in - putting on a shoe, putting on a jacket, hopping. They all fell flat as students performed the tasks, but did not verbalize more than, "Put on the shoe," or "Lift one foot off the floor. Hop."

It was predictable that the instructions would not accomplish the task methodically. They were not supposed to. It was supposed to bring on hilarious laughter, laughter at teacher, laughter at oneself. Laughter, togetherness, mutual understanding. It didn't - because neither Xiao Hong nor her classmates had witnessed or participated in anything they understood to be funny. My very conscious and previously successful slapstick was, instead, a poignant reminder of the Chinese cultural value of keeping face and the perceived necessity for Teacher to be perfect.

Where did such a terrific plan go awry? What assumptions were mistaken? Was the blindfold a bad idea? Should I have selected someone else to give the instructions? Someone with less face to lose? A boy? The class as a whole? And the sandwich, my goodness, putting that filthy thing into my mouth was beyond the pale!

Hindsight

The bases upon which I decided to teach this lesson were the result of teacher intuition, that is, an unsystematic approach to providing cultural information. My lack of systematicity left students with unstructured information rather than any deep and accurate knowledge that could help them to resolve cultural negative hetero-stereotypes (Byram et al., 1994). I felt I knew my class well enough that we could have a bit of fun together in a light, laughter filled respite from the daily grind. With the following reflections I explore impacts which were incurred at the time and which, given other

circumstances and greater cross-cultural awareness, might have been predictable. Impacts of cultural expectations regarding student and teacher relationships follow.

Temporal Impacts Incurred or Predictable

Unlike ESL contexts and other English language classes where I had taught this lesson, here, I was in foreign territory. Outside of my classroom, students and I functioned in a Chinese world according to Chinese social norms. Even in my own classroom, I often felt unsure of myself as I waded in the murky Chinese waters of my classroom. In my classroom, because I was a foreigner, I had greater freedom in selecting, designing and presenting curriculum than was the norm for Chinese teachers (Ford, 1988).

I took my sense of classroom appropriacy from my socio-cultural history as a teacher of ESL and applied it here in this existential environment. Little did I know that the Chinese classroom is no place for levity, that my Chinese students were more likely to regard this lesson as a waste of time (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Penner, 1995). I allowed my enthusiasm for a change of pace and student success in Literature to cloud my judgment, and over-confidently assumed they would be able to integrate and transfer their language skills and strategies to this new context. I felt frustrated and rejected. Depressed about my inability to teach these students, I withdrew, a common reflection of culture shock (Brown, 1986; Oxford, 1994). The next day the coldness that met me in class confirmed my intuition that we should return to the language laboratory and the superficiality of world current events until the holiday.

And that was another mistake. Only in lingering there in the cold could I have gained salvation by entering into a discussion that explored what had gone wrong and why. Ah, for hindsight! Teaching is more of learning, I think. It is ironic that the point of that lesson was the importance of carefully analyzing a task into its constituent parts, verbalizing methodically so that one's listener can successfully complete an assigned task. I had not done that in planning, conducting or following up that lesson.

As a lesson from the culture or experiential syllabus, this one had great potential(Stern, 1992). I considered it would be inherently interesting as a cultural phenomenon both of Canadian ideas about what was funny, and as a future snack possibility for students (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Stern, 1992). Despite that I feel confident that a lot of learning surely took place, I now understand my students probably regarded it, at best, as a waste of their time. *I* certainly learned a great deal. And so did my students. But what did they learn? Did they learn anything about giving instructions? Did they learn any more English? Or did they learn how silly a Westerner is willing to be in front of others? Did I merely confirm their preconception of Westerners as barbarian pigs (Clavell,

1966)? Would I be permanently scarred with their condemnation of me for my lack of sophistication, my lack of awareness of the need for sanitation in food consumption? How deep to the core of my students' being did my errors cut?

There is no doubt that there was a clash of interpretations as students learned things other than what I thought I was teaching, interpreting the gap between beliefs I espoused about teaching and learning and my actions (Newman, 1987). Reflective thoughts that occurred to me that day as I slouched dejectedly in my office chair were relatively superficial, related directly to the teaching environment and to my intended focus on functional language. In the privacy of my office I rejected the experience as a bad day. No, the lesson had certainly not gone as I had expected.

Cultural Expectations

I see now that virtually no part of this lesson fit my students' "set for learning" (Richards, 1986) based on prior experience of what language education is and the role a teacher should play in it (Ma, 1992; White, 1989). My behaviour did not conform to patterns for behavior set in the past by Xiao Hong's society or her teachers. My students would never have been in a class anything like this. The breadth and depth of their educational experience had not provided a schema for this one. Without adequate background the entire lesson was rejected for lack of cultural fit (Carrell, 1984). Therefore, students' safest response was none at all. I had violated so many cultural norms all at once that students were appalled. Alas, I was only confused.

I had conducted myself outside the bounds of what Oxford (1994) refers to as technical cultural norms, rules openly known and easily stated by insiders. These mistakes are easily corrected, without offense being taken, and include some educational practices and customs of functional language.

Although shortcomings and violations of conscious technical cultural norms in the planning of "Peanut butter" should, of course, not have occurred, alone, they would not likely have caused offense. However, violations of informal cultural norms are much more serious and less foreseeable infractions. People are not conscious of the existence or able to communicate effectively about cultural norms at this deep-seated level (Oxford, 1994). My failure to deeply and purposively reflect on "Peanut butter" with students promulgated a perception of a lack of sincerity in my intentions to consider their culture. I was left with hurt feelings of rejection characteristic of stage two culture shock. The excitement and euphoria had passed, and I was as yet unable to empathetically reconcile differences in our education cultures; rather my self-image and identity as teacher were intruded upon (Brown, 1986).

In English classes taught by Chinese teachers, students were accustomed to studying English language forms; in both Pronunciation and Intonation and in my Literature class they were accustomed to analysing meanings from short written or oral passages primarily for comprehension. In this context, Students did not understand that I was teaching while I was preparing the sandwich and eating it. Teachers normally drink tea, chew gum or suck a candy. But they do not consume veritable meals in class! If I had instructed them at the outset to observe carefully what I was about to do so that they would be able to instruct me in a repetition of the process, schema would have been increased. By so doing my students would have understood my actions as modeling, a technique I used often in other classes we had together (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). If I had but asked, students might easily have verbalized these mistakes for me. Indeed, I recognized that eating in class is outside the norm, and later, that I had not been adequately prepared. But these were not my usual *mode d'emploi.* As one-time errors these were not offensive and were correctable.

This lesson only implicitly asked students to transfer, without having established a structure, sufficient rationale or preliminary review of abstract learning strategies from L1 that might have helped them, to integrate cognitive and affective methods for understanding embedded cross-cultural phenomena. They could not bridge that gap without explicit teaching. And I failed to see the opportunity for changing my teaching intent from functional language in experiential content to an intention of supplementing cross-cultural awareness (Oxford, 1994). This lesson could have been an opportunity to integrate principles of language teaching methodology, curriculum development, observation, functional language and/or evaluation and in my curricular *design* (Penner, 1995). I had taken undue advantage of the greater freedom I had as a foreigner to select resources and determine presentation methods (Ford, 1988).

But worse, I had transgressed rules of formal culture. While students might have told me the rules existed, they could not have known the reasons for them (Oxford, 1994). Rules about things like cooking, game playing, and etiquette. If numerous students had been called upon to provide subsequent instructions, no one would have been singled out for embarrassment. I had misinterpreted the quality of the relationship I had with Xiao Hong, not realizing that the amiable familiarity we shared in our private Chinese lessons could not extend to the English language classroom where she was observed by her classmates. Instead, my attempt at slapstick humour was viewed as an undue, apparently intentional public humiliation, at the expense of their most prestigious student. Like Jasmine,

> I suspect the Chinese teachers simply would not have done the kinds of things that I did. I use a lot of humour in my class. I use a lot of pretty

> slapstick stuff. I use humour wherever I am, and I expect people to laugh and enjoy themselves.

Unfortunately, my conduct in this case toward Xiao Hong, the political monitor, the daughter of a cadre, a high achieving and hard working student was unforgivable. I had not recognized the grip of static social roles in constraining the breadth of roles one may play. Xiao Hong nor I should allow ourselves to be seen to err, or to clown. If I had asked them to originate an instructional dialogue and rehearse it outside of class for in-class performance the following day, any embarrassment would have been private. If I had understood the potentially dire consequences of contravening rules and taboos related to informal aspects of culture such as food consumption (Oxford, 1994), I might have chosen another activity entirely, thus leaving myself much less vulnerable to embarrassment. These violations of formal cultural values caused students to become emotionally involved (Oxford, 1994). I broke rules students knew existed but would likely have been unable, certainly unwilling, to verbalize.

In addition to these rather superficial observations, other deeper misunderstandings were at play. They were misunderstandings related to our innermost beings, the way we view ourselves as a species. These kinds of rules are learned through imitation, the responses for which are dictated automatically, and are thus taken for granted. They include rules about eye contact, status, behaviour, personal and physical distance, about cleanliness, friendship and justice (Oxford, 1994).

I have no doubt that two fundamental discourse differences contributed in large part to the very considerable set-back I suffered, the more basic of which is holism in communication. In Chinese literary analysis, as well as in interpersonal communication, there is an assumption of meaning beyond and more significant than the representations given them on the page or in the utterances. The focus is on obtaining meanings which are extra to the text, and may be only subtly alluded to in the text (Yang, 1993). Thus, meaning making is an integration of various cognitive and affective mental experiences (Sampson, 1990). Students' engagement in our examination of poetry demonstrated a willingness to indulge me in my questioning so long as it was clear I was attempting to help them understand holistic meanings authors imparted. English and Chinese poetry are parsimonious in their verbiage, making extensive use of flowery metaphor and figurative language to make meanings more significant than that signified on the page.

In this suddenly introduced TPR lesson (Richard-Amato, 1988; Richards, 1986), I don't think students were able to grasp much of my teaching intentions. Instead, I expect they were unable to see beyond the surface of what they had witnessed. That was radically different from the form focused teaching just previous, in the language laboratory. I had

provided inadequate transition, and students saw it as an exercise unworthy of academia, possessing no "pure learning" for them (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). As such, they were unable to link new information presented to past experience in education and felt I had wasted their time (Maley, 1986; Penner, 1995).

Related to and extended from holistic discourse is an expectation of indirectness in communication. It is considered rude to speak directly of things that the listener or reader is assumed to know. Instead, a generalization is presented together with sufficient supporting information for the student to learn what is required. In countries where individual motivation is discredited, one would subtly provide the student with a lot of context, intended to be thought-provoking, and wait for an informative response indicating the level of understanding obtained (Fox, 1994).

As Ai Ci said, in the context of well-planned lectures, not uncommonly delivered from memory, the competent teacher provides all that the student needs to know. There will be no questions if teaching is effective. Questions asked portrayed either an inadequate attempt to learn, or imply teacher incompetence (Fox, 1994). In any case, someone loses face. I failed to understand, for example, that Xiao Hong's assent with dissenting body language or her unconvincing "yes", meant "no" (Fox, 1994). Thus I was unable to ascertain the parameters of what was known by interpreting extra-linguistic cues and body language. My violation of these informal cultural rules for appropriate discourse caused considerable anxiety.

I had assumed my students in China were students all the same, that teaching was teaching, fundamentally the same the world over, and that as a result we had a high level of mutual understanding of expectations. In fact this level of understanding did not exist. We mistakenly transferred expectations about formal education (Brick, 1991; McKay, 1992; Richards, 1986). My students expected me to have a level of cultural awareness of them and their ways of living and knowing reality that I did not possess. They expected that I would conduct myself according to their standards, of which I was unaware, and that I would observe proper etiquette (Brick, 1991). Instead, I had become a dirtied object. My direct communication was considered rude. My instructions asked them to be rude to each other. Therefore, my actions served to reinforce the negative hetero-stereotypes (Byram et al., 1994) they hold of Westerners. It would take some time, and considerable effort, to recoup my loss.

As Zhi Hui expressed, students expect a FE to simply be "good teacher", to relate well and to be accepted, and students are prepared to "treat them as a teacher", demonstrating toward them the respect that is their due. Implications of the Chinese conception of respect for superiors and foreigners, often the same thing, meant that

students could not question, contradict or criticize what I had done lest I should take offense. Thus, it was impossible for students to initiate any exploration of my cultural errors. They expected me, as their teacher, to conform to norms in place since ancient times - as a moral, professional and spiritual model who values what is inherently good in the student. A good teacher helps to elucidate and expand those good characteristics, taking care not to distort the development of the student through undue external pressures in any direction (Sampson, 1984). In this sticky mess I was distressed that students would feel I had failed them.

But these latter reflections, deeper and more significant, did not occur to me until much later, some only today. Through friendships with Chinese colleagues I have had many opportunities to discuss frustrations I experienced in China. Though I have never, and probably will not, relate this story *to them*, our discussions have supplemented my understandings of it. They certainly did not all come to me then, when they could have helped me. Was that what losing face is? Was it due to my lost face that Xiao Hong discovered shortly thereafter that she was simply too busy to continue to teach me Chinese?

I was embarrassed, that is true, so embarrassed I had no desire to discuss the lesson with my students. Nonetheless, as negative as the experience was, I do not feel that I lost face in the way that a Chinese might have in similar circumstances. I simply did not have the schema for that sort of loss. For Canadians, the issue of face is not one that is at the forefront of our consciousness in moment by moment communications. The consequences and severity of loss of face through an incident such as this were, fore me, less traumatic than students might have expected. And so, the following day, I did there, in China, as I would have in Canada. I wore my usual warmly welcoming smile in anticipation of the new day. I walked into class, made a comment regarding the "bad day", and invited my students to follow me to the language laboratory.

Regardless of my perception, in my students' eyes I had lost face. Yet I lacked either the theoretical background or experience of Chinese-ness to plan and deliver lessons that would quickly replenish their lost esteem of me. From time to time I would continue to find myself in predicaments a Chinese teacher would never risk being subjected to. I turn now to a closer examination of how expectations of teacher planning and delivery of lessons effects the internalized experience of language education.

"Peanut butter" represents the most poignant memory among several failed efforts to develop student awareness of experiences of daily living in the West through active participation. The multifaceted and unmitigated fiasco of "Peanut butter" reflects what I believe to be the inability of cross-culturally ignorant and inadequately experienced

expatriate FL teachers to accurately gauge teaching affects when students' cultural norms differ vastly from one's own. "One cannot expect that learners will take readily to modes of behavior in the language class which are at variance with those which are promoted in their other lessons" (Widdowson, 1990, p. 128). My experience reinforces the validity of researchers' statements (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Li, 1984; Ma, 1992; Penner, 1995; Zhuang, 1984) that activities characteristic of the experiential syllabus in CLT do not successfully transfer cross-culturally. Students perceive many such activities as reflective of a lack of thorough planning with the result that negative cultural stereotypes are reinforced (Byram et al., 1994).

In the context of this lesson students saw no additional language product they could absorb from me that would help them pass their exams, increase their language competency or provide desirable inter-cultural knowledge, according to their expectation of my purpose as their teacher. The opening structure was so open they viewed it as unplanned. Although I believed they would gain some command of cultural knowledge by being enabled to "experience it, apply it, analyze it and evaluate it" (Ting, 1987) this lesson was so far removed from the familiar that they could not deal with it (Richards, 1986; Smith, 1994).

My students had only ever had any contact with four or five foreigners in their lives, all teachers at our college. In their second year one of those people, a Canadian, taught them. Like most college students, mine came to me with only a superficial understanding of westerners, stereotyped expectations, prejudices and biases (Byram et al., 1994; Oxford, 1994). Among their stereotypes was an expectation for egalitarian treatment, the hope that I would show respect for them by treating them as equals. And I hoped in return that, as Ai Ci said, "then your students will respond, they will respect you." Over time and exposure I tried to move them to an appreciation of our similarities and tolerance for our differences (Oxford, 1994). "Peanut butter" notwithstanding, as students and I developed a comfortable relationship, and we learned to trust each other, students did acquire the ability to question their foreign "superior".

In short supply and high demand all teachers of English, whether Chinese or foreign, work harder and longer hours than Chinese in other content areas. In contrast to me, Jasmine and Farr were more frank with administrators about their professional limitations and personal professional expertise, a reflection I believe of their greater personal confidence resulting from their more advanced education and status back home. As experienced teachers, Farr, a Ph.D., Jasmine, an M.Ed., and I, holding a B.Ed. and Graduate Diploma, agreed that FEs were considered senior faculty (Ford, 1988). It seemed that the extra set of letters behind our names compensated for any lack of specialization in the more prestigious theoretical disciplines of linguistics or

literature (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). We were endowed with great prestige and high status despite our lack of recent SL theoretical background or teaching experience. While we found this lack limited our ability to teach with maximum effectiveness, training in such practical concerns is considered of little consequence when pitted against the perceived greater value of our native speaker accent and pronunciation (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Ting, 1987).

Thus foreign teachers will continue to be useful for some time to come as they possess, at minimum, language competency as model (Ting, 1987). It is the view of Fes herein as well as that of Zhang (1995) that "one of the most important prerequisites for reform is to produce better qualified teachers fully trained in modern [communicative] methodologies" (Zhang, 1995). The urgent task of teacher training must facilitate student recovery of deadened imaginative and creative abilities lest certain aspects of China's quest for modernization are lost (Ting, 1987).

EFL teachers in foreign contexts must continue to work with students to discover those elements of our philosophy of teaching and language education, our socio-cultural and existential milieu, that are essential to our practice. In accord with the experience of Lydia's friend who acceded to wearing a veil while in the Middle East, we need to be prepared to release our grip on non-essential cultural norms and values in favour of more basic cultural needs. Cultural *faux pas* of the sort described in "Peanut butter" are inevitable when members of two very different cultural sets are brought together. The outcomes of those frustrations are the basis for professional and personal growth. One examines one's purpose in being in that new cultural context and in the profession of FL teaching, reflects critically, and grows by acting upon the products of one's reflections. This cross-cultural exchange is not only a personal goal but a professional responsibility (Stern, 1983). We too must see with an "enlightened eye" (Eisner, 1991) and an open mind, alternative views of reality.

"The Chinese way" showed me that in a positively reinforcing atmosphere students could cope with certain innovations to canon and teaching strategies in a participatory way. But with "Peanut butter" I went too far. As I look back I understand "Peanut butter" as an experiment that gave me some understanding of parameters appropriate for experiential learning in the Chinese context. It forced students from within their familiar cultural context to the brink of an unknown abyss, leaving them with no safe haven. Their only safety lay in passive resistance (Penner, 1995; Smith, 1994), rejecting me since they had no schema for learning from me in this context. I found, indeed, that Chinese students would not be creating verbal or pictorial collages, sculptures or dioramas to demonstrate holistic understandings taken from the literature they read as students back home had so enjoyed doing. I would have to be tolerant of their content preferences in

their Chinese context (Ma, 1992; Penner, 1995), and adapt my foreigner teaching to their Chinese needs. To do otherwise would have resulted in my continuing to be shut out of their educational processing in a practice of mass passive resistance.

In the context of this lesson I failed to fulfill student expectations of the role of a competent teacher, and I expect students were shocked at my bad behavior. In turn I was utterly confused by their reactions. Now, as I look back and analyze the events of that fateful day, I see the lesson more from my students' perspective and understand that incorrect cultural assumptions, inadequate or non-existent content schema on the part both of students and myself contributed in large measure to the failure. Perhaps if I had understood more deeply the nature of the requirement for indirect communication I would not have presented this lesson, or would have done so in such a way that students were empowered to search it for language learnings consistent with their expectations. If I had used that lesson as a context from which to develop cross-cultural awareness as partners in a learning community, perhaps things would have been different. At that time we could have learned much about the schema we had for educationally appropriate activities, expectations about lesson structure, communication patterns and the student and teacher's role. Alas, those are not the choices made at the time and a teachable moment was lost. In hindsight I see changes I might have made. The readings of this study, interview data and my narrative inquiry process have helped me understand my role as a FE in China much better.

H. H. Stern, a leading proponent of CLT, says that

> "the essential characteristics of a communicative syllabus may be described as holistic or authentic, and the teaching strategy associated with this syllabus as experiential or non-analytic" (Stern, 1992, p. 177).

Authentic daily experiences of Western life; non-analytic activities implemented for their inherent interest will most likely be deemed a "waste of time", inappropriate as formal education practice (Brick, 1991; Carrell, 1984; Penner, 1995). The value of holism is consistent with Chinese cultural norms. But uninformed imposition of our philosophy of culture implied by the approach will surely increase existing tensions between student and teacher. Western value assumptions about partnership, community and ample resources do not apply in China. However, cooperation, collaboration and collegiality with students is possible through transition.

In a process of adapting to changes in cultural milieu a FE who is a "good teacher" will search for ways to teach language as a tool for communication. *Another time*, I would be more able to apply my grounded theory that effective EFL practice in China requires integrating similarities of Chinese-ness and Canadian-ness. *Another time*, in a "new

story" I could, according to Mao's slogan: "Let the past serve the present; make foreign things serve China" (Penner, 1995). *Another time*, I could "teach the masses clearly what [I] have learned from them confusedly" (Mao Tse Tung quoted in Paulo Friere, 1973:82 by Patricia Lather, 1991). This roundabout quote shows it has been a process of developing intercultural self-awareness.

Chapter VI Implications for Future Research

As I draw closure to this narrative inquiry into the roles and relationship of Chinese students and FEs, I search now, in the cycle of temporal continuity, to find its applicability for others like me. Thousands of Canadian teachers arrive every year in different countries throughout the world as workers in the "English industry". In China, the two-hour orientation I received did not prepare me for even the *nature* of differences in socio-cultural values and existential realities of educational economics, policy, or environment that would impact upon my professional life. If only I could have been provided with some background knowledge that would ameliorate some of the inevitable culture shock, I would have made more informed decisions from the outset of my experience.

I would have benefited from some general cognitive awareness, an induced schema, of the role expected of me, and of the role I might expect of students, and the relationship I could expect to develop with them (Barnitz, 1986). About the role of the student, I would have liked to know the nature of impacts that were likely, given students' socio-cultural history and existential reality. For example,

1. what is Confucius' philosophical influence on my students' understanding of education,
2. how do they understand concepts of knowledge, learning and literacy differently from or similarly to me?
3. what values guide interpersonal relationships?
4. what events, monuments and people give Chinese their sense of cultural identity?
5. how is their society structured?
6. what support resources are available to me?
7. what are the expectations of my Chinese counterparts in the process of delivering language education?
8. what are students' life goals?
9. what are their motivations for learning English?
10. by what strategies do they learn best, i.e. usual strengths and weaknesses, as learners of English?

11. how am I different from my Chinese colleagues in matters of character, pedagogic competence, language competence, and delivery of language education?
12. what should I expect of myself regarding character and pedagogic competence?
13. how is delivery of language education in our two countries different and similar?

All of these things could be cursorily addressed through a short-course. Implications of such a course, where it is offered, by whom, at what point in the departure process would be issues for analysis and research.

I expect that FEs would learn that we and our Chinese colleagues, and Chinese students, are a lot alike and a little different. That was my experience. Sometimes the particulars of differences overshadowed our bonds of similarity. In realizing that, I surprise to learn too how similar I have been to teachers I have had. It seems I have come full circle.

I remember still the trauma I experienced in high school when I was asked to make a paradigm shift. So, let me tell one last story... .

On reflection: Paradigm shift required

It is amazing that this memory did not occur to me throughout my year in China. With the capacity, time and effort I have taken to reflect upon other experiences in China, remembering this one of my own with an "enlightened eye" (Eisner, 1991) would have been most instructive. Because I hoped to go to university after high school I was enrolled in the academic course stream. In the third and final year of high school, academic students wrote very stressful and important Departmental Exams, a set of government standardized examinations used to screen students for post-secondary education opportunities. A similar situation exists in China.

In Biology 10 I had achieved well by traditional teaching methods. We were required to read assigned textbook chapters, take notes, answer questions on the material from the text and teacher lectures, to perform laboratory experiments that met the expected outcomes, to write quizzes designed to help us and our teacher monitor our progress and need for extra study. The course was consistent with my learning experience and expectations. A similar situation in exists in China.

The next year in our country school my Biology 20 class looked forward to a rare experience. We were to be taught by a new teacher. He was young and newly graduated from university. We were excited at the prospect of new ways he night have of teaching. We were not disappointed in that, though we did become confused. A similar situation exists for students of Foreign Experts in China.

He put the class on self-monitored self-directed study (Murray, 1994) contracts. The only requirement was that we complete certain portions of the course by mid-term, and the full course by the final exam in June. As part of a four-member team, we agreed to read certain chapters for each exam and perform the experiments. Our team came to the consensus that it was redundant to actually write out responses to the text's questions provided we understood the concepts. There were no lectures, though we were encouraged to ask any questions we might have. Our young teacher was most forth-coming with answers and probing questions that facilitated our learning - whenever we asked him. There were none of the usual intrusive checks on our progress. We were incredulous at this freedom and the trust our new teacher placed in us. A

misguided trust. I facilitated a pronunciation and intonation contract for students in China designed to assist them to remediate fossilized errors.

I kept up my commitment to my team members and I wrote the exams. But I failed the course. In China (virtually) no one fails a college course.

No doubt there were other factors at play in those days. But it seems pertinent in this context to note that my experience of what learning and teaching was were inconsistent with this new self-directed mode of teaching. No previous courses in my schooling, nor any other courses in that year were taught in this way. The role I expected the teacher to play, and the role I saw for myself were corrupted. A similar situation existed for me and my students in China.

At that time I was the student. But I unknowingly put my students in the same kind of confusing situation I had experienced. There I was the teacher, the "Expert". I asked them to learn in a different paradigm, in a way that was inconsistent with their experience and expectations. They did not know how to increase their English competency from the methods I sometimes chose. Some of my students did not understand my rationale for teaching the way I did, did not understand my requirements on assignments nor how to meet them, and on my exams or essays, did not achieve as they expected to do. My techniques were different from their traditional ones.

I had invited my students to be open and frank with me, acknowledging that we were unfamiliar with each other's ways. I did not recognize that they could not take my invitation at face value because the relationship between teacher and student they were accustomed to prevented individual openness and frankness. They viewed my role as that of all-knowing, and to make suggestions or question my teaching practice was to question my professionalism and competence as a teacher. They were neither so insolent nor so rude.

One or two students did come to me on occasion with complaints. I did not credit that they were coming as delegates of their peers. I simply thought that, as my Canadian students had so often done, they were limit-testing, trying to do less than required. That, too, may have occurred on occasion. But overall, I had not sufficient knowledge of their prior learning experience and curriculum, teacher/students roles and relationships, teaching strategies they were accustomed to, nor the limits upon use of available teaching materials.

As teacher, I was given virtually no guidance as to the role I or my courses were expected to play in the overall curriculum, nor the relationship I could expect with my

students. Therefore I expected my class and my students to behave much the same as my students had in my previous twelve years of teaching. Out of class, my questions often met with polite evasion, referrals to other students or subtle reference to proverbs and stories I was little able to relate to my original inquiry or quandary. My only guidance was the little that I was able to obtain from those few students authorized to speak for others.

Gradually I learned who could or would give advice, and what their status was in the class. Eventually, I came to some limited understanding of the dynamics regarding the curriculum and my students' motivation to achieve. They were now college students. They had achieved a level of competence on government standardized exams that enabled them to be there. They ***would all*** *pass. Those who had good job prospects, or expected to go on to further study, worked very hard, and some opportunities did exist that provided them the continued motivation to do so. A few girls and one boy that I remember could be said to have been integratively motivated by a sincere desire to understand other cultural groups (Buttjes, 1991). Most, whose job prospects were limited to teaching or whose language ability was less advanced, did not work hard or achieve according to my expectations.*

While in China I never though about the connection between my experience as a student taking Biology 20 on a contract basis, and my students' attempts to cope with my teaching strategies. I did not remember then how confused I felt at my new teacher's innovations in teaching practice.

I did not remember that, although I was motivated to achieve, I was not accustomed to the different role he expected to play in my learning, to the different relationship he expected students to have with him, or to the different teaching and learning strategies he implemented. He was a teacher. I was his student. I would do what I was told, when I was told, to the level that was required and that I was able and willing to accomplish. He is a very nice person, and he probably cared deeply, as I did, about his student's success. I expect he has developed into a fine teacher. But at that time, I could not learn from his teaching style.

In China, I believed my role as EFL teacher was that of facilitator. I certainly had no perception of myself as an EFL expert. I expected my students to play a role as autonomous learners, aware and self-directed in pursuing their learning needs and goals. I tried to teach ESL by a communicative holistic approach according to past successful teaching experiences in Canada. My students were accustomed to learning by a traditional, didactic, teacher-centred approach.

In Biology 20, and in China, student and teacher played the roles we expected were expected of us, and did what we thought we ought to do. Unfortunately, in each instance our assumptions, the schema we were used to, did not correspond. And so we, neither student nor teacher in any case, got what we hoped for or expected to from our courses. "But in the other things I was always disappointed. Perhaps they were not very well-trained", Zhi Hui said.

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Appendix A Glossary of Terms

Asian students - Although there are some students from the Chinese mainland in ESL classes at Canadian institutions, they are a small minority. Teachers referred to students from Viet Nam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan and China as "Asian", as indeed, they themselves do. Therefore, I too, refer herein to students in Canadian ESL classes as "Asian".

certified teachers –Those who hold a Bachelor's Degree in Education or similar academic teaching qualification.

culture - the values, mores, ethics, and ways of living of a population, designated ethnically, linguistically, or by national or natural geographic boundaries

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) - learned by people who expect to continue speaking their native language primarily, and to continue residence in their native country, but would use English for business, professional or recreational purposes (Brown, 1986)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) – learned by those who expect to continue speaking their native first language primarily, to continue as permanent residents in their native country, but expect to use English for business, professional or recreational purposes.

English as a Second Language (ESL) - learned by people who have, or who intend to, immigrate to places where English is the typical first language and where a high proportion of their communication would be in English.

Foreign Expert (FE) - This term is used only because that is the name attributed by the Chinese Foreign Experts Bureau to expatriate workers they hire or recruit for hiring institutions who have at least a Bachelor's degree. They are qualified for their positions by their foreign language competency and a university degree in a content area. In this document it refers to teachers of English in Chinese colleges, universities or teacher up-grading programs. The term is used only because that is the name attributed to those who have at least a Bachelor's degree by the Chinese Foreign Experts Bureau. It is not intended to imply any implicit ethnocentrism. It is used interchangeably with "Canadian expatriate teachers.

industrializing nations - Countries where technological "advancements" are sought after, but not commonly available, once referred to as third, fourth or fifth worlds. It is difficult to know how those nations would prefer to be referred to in the have now/have not yet binary of north/south worlds.

input activities - instructional activities designed to increase language competence as received communication

linguistic code - information structured from words related to a particular language, eg. written text and audio are linguistically based systems.

native language speaker – those for whom the language is learned as the "mother tongue", and who possess spoken fluency

output activities - communications intended to practice, display, or demonstrate communicative competency, expressed communication

traditional language teaching methods - teaching characterized by a didactic approach hierarchical in nature, emphasizing grammar translation and audio-lingual method, usually in combination (Wang, 1994) but perhaps supplemented with direct method

Western – Chinese people often referred to "the West" as those cultures/nations, primarily in the Western Hemisphere, where English is the language of business and/or the official and practical language of daily communication. These are countries perceived to be "modern" and "industrialized". They include United States of America, Canada and Britain as well as Australia and some western European countries including Germany and France.